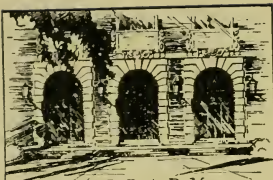




LOVING  
AND  
LOTH



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# LOVING AND LOTH.

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“ROSA NOEL,” AND “THE SISTERS LAWLESS.”

“Escape me?

Never—

Beloved!

While I am I, and you are you,

So long as the world contains us both,

Me the loving, and you the loth,

While the one eludes

Must the other pursue . . . .”

R. BROWNING.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON.

1875.

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# LOVING AND LOTH.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE UPPER HAND.

“**A**LICE, did you know that Sir Alfred had an anonymous letter sent him, telling him of Mr. Everard’s marriage? It was intended to be a clandestine marriage; and if Everard could have kept it a secret, his prospects would not have been at all injured.”

A day had passed since Susie had come from Willowpool. The two cousins were seated alone in the morning-room.

“How should I know anything about it? You never told me.”

“Well, he did have a letter written to him. And it caused a fracas; of course, that was its object. A very wicked thing to do, was it not?”

“I don’t know: it is not prohibited in the ten commandments.”

“Oh, Alice; but such a knavish trick! Who could have sent it?”

“There are plenty of knaves to do knavish tricks. The world abounds with knaves. They are always on hand, except when you are trying for a double *bézique*.” Alice’s tone and manner were perfectly void of consciousness, or uneasiness, but her eyes went wandering about the room. “Whoever wrote it, they might have spared themselves the trouble, as Aunt Margaret damaged his prospects sufficiently,” she added, with a clear precision of utterance.

Susie sat silent; meditating what blister-

ing or wily remark she could make that would force her cousin into self-betrayal. But before any trenchant combination of words had presented themselves to her, the door opened.

“Enter Pompey’s Pillar!” said Alice, addressing her long-legged young sister, who now came forward. “Where have you been, Stork?”

“I wish you wouldn’t call me such ugly names, Alice,” said Cora, half crying. “I am sure I am no taller than you are.”

“But if you are this sort of size at twelve, what will you be at nineteen? We shall all have to get up on stilts to talk to you. You have grown several inches since I saw you this morning. I know what you have been doing! You have been under the frames with the cucumbers.”

“I haven’t.”

“Then you have been planting yourself in the garden, and have got one of the

gardeners to water you with the hose, like Susie's old friend, Mr. Gream."

"Oh, Susie!" said Cora, opening her eyes wide, and forgetting her anger against her sister in the wish to get at the truth of this interesting statement. "Did he really plant himself in the ground, thinking it might make him grow?"

"No; only his umbrellas and walking-sticks."

Cora laughed immoderately.

"Tilly says," continued Susie, "that he lives almost entirely on ginger-bread and orange-peel; he eats them together."

"I would not have left the house without seeing him," said Alice, positively.

"Yes, you would," rejoined Susie, equally positively, "though perhaps, after all, you might have managed by *sending him a note*"—(this with biting emphasis)—"and distinctly refusing in it to leave his walls until he had given you a sight of him."



“We are too old to be talking such nonsense,” remarked Alice, with an accession of dignity, and raising her eyebrows. “I think that I shall go for a walk. You are too fragile to come, I suppose?”

“I don’t want to come,” said Susie.

Alice went out of the room, perhaps not wishing to be subjected to any further verifying process.

She had not been long gone, when Susie, turning to her cousin, said,

“We will go for a drive, Cora, in my new pony carriage. John can drive from the back.”

In three quarters of an hour the young pair were driving with delightful independence through the muddy, dull roads of the country. It was about half-past three o’clock of a windless, sunless, sloppy day. Everything was reeking with moisture; everything was neutral tinted. It was profoundly gloomy, quiet, and lonely.

“I wish we could meet one solitary person,” cried Susie, after stretching a yawn to its utmost limits, “just to be sure that the world really is inhabited—that everybody except ourselves has not been swept off the island in the night.”

“There is a man!” cried Cora, in the manner of a triumphant discoverer, “with a spade.”

Then followed a long silence, waiting to be broken by the sight of another human being.

“There are two people,” said Cora, at last. “It looks rather like Alice——”

Susie followed the direction of her eyes. What should there have been to send the blood so quickly to her cheeks, in the humdrum sight of a lady in homespun, a Norfolk jacket, and a felt hat, walking by the side of a gentleman in homespun, a Norfolk jacket, and a felt hat?

“It is Alice,” continued Cora, uncertainty

changed into certainty, "taking a walk with a gentleman."

Susie made no reply to her.

"Drive faster," she said, peremptorily, to the groom. "We'll splash them well!" she added, to her little cousin.

"On purpose, Susie?"

"No; it cannot be helped."

The ponies went past Alice and Hungerford at a smart pace, covering them with muddy wafers.

Susie looked over her shoulder, smiling and nodding a greeting.

"Turn through by the farm, and go home," she said.

Then to Cora, "I have had enough of these murky, muddy roads. It is a penance!" This last under her breath.

When they reached St. Quentin's, they found that Alice and Hungerford, having cut across the fields, were there before them. Sir Alfred, and his sister and wife,

had returned from Ryde, where they had been, and all were assembled in the morning-room, beginning to take tea.

Sir Alfred was full of a porous clay jar he had seen with cress growing out of it.

“It is more curious than our Chinese monster, with his grass whiskers. But he is ludicrous enough. I should like you to see him,” and Sir Alfred made as if he would rise from his chair, but being tired, stiff, and indolent, he sank back again.

“Susie,” he said, “take Mr. Hungerford, and show him the porcelain monster in the conservatory.”

“I should like very much to see it,” said Hungerford, with a horticultural eagerness.

Susie got up grudgingly, and marching on before, led him through the drawing-room into a conservatory at one end.

“There it is,” she said, curtly, pointing to a nondescript China creature on the

floor, with grasses sprouting out of the jowls.

“Very odd,” said Hungerford, glancing at it. “You presented me with enough mud to grow a tuft of Pampas grass in,” he went on, looking at his spattered clothes. “How is your arm?”

“Oh, pretty well,” replied Susie, not very graciously. “You, I suppose, are quite yourself again?”

“I certainly am no one else,” he returned, half bitterly.

“You must expect to be splashed,” said Susie, “if you will go a-foot on these muddy roads.”

“It is not objectionable to be splashed by your ponies.”

“Aha! Ask Alice if it is not.”

“I was on my way here to call when I met your cousin.”

“Yes?”

“I leave Cowes the day after to-morrow.”

“Do you?”

“So this is good-bye—unless you prefer to have it au-revoir.”

“I?”

“Yes. I intend you to express a preference, that my future movements may be directed by what you say.”

“I intend *not* to express a preference,” said Susie, throwing back her head and pouting. “You treat me—I don’t know *how* you treat me!”

He had studied human nature to too good purpose not to see that her tone and manner were those of a piqued woman. Here was a tempting opportunity to rouse in her the latent jealousy that would upspring on seeing him attentive to her cousin.

He could perfectly well stay on a little longer at Cowes superintending the building of his yacht, and be met half-way by Alice in the accommodating fashion of the girl of the period.

---

It would be a most enjoyable situation. And there is nothing more fruitful of results than jealousy.

“I am perfectly willing to say either to you,” said Susie, speaking again, as he remained silent. “I am perfectly willing to——”

He waved his hand.

“You need not repeat,” he remarked, in his unruffled way. “I heard what you said—I am not deaf.”

“You are a prig,” cried Susie, in a rage. “Yes ; the moment has come at last when I must speak out plainly. You are a prig !”

“At last ! If you had said that the moment had come at last when you abstained from speaking out, and held your——”

“I shall resist telling you what *else* I think of you,” interrupted she, in the tone of one who fasts from gratification.

“I think that a time will come when

you will give up resistance—of another sort. Now see here”—catching her one hand, and forcing her to face him—“forget that you are angry, and answer me, deliberately and in cold blood. Do you think me a prig?”

“Well, there is another word something like prig which defines you better. I could not think of it. I cannot now.”

He released her hand with a slight laugh.

“Those birds are beasts,” said Susie, glancing up at two canaries which were singing vociferously, ear-crackingly. “I am going.”

She turned and went back to the room they had left. He, of course, followed.

“What do you think of it?” asked Sir Alfred.

“Very odd,” said Hungerford. “I like odd things.”

“*I'll* be odd,” said Miss Willis to herself. “I can be anything at a moment’s notice.”



“How long do you expect to be down here?” inquired Sir Alfred.

“A day or two longer.”

“Come and dine with us to-morrow evening, will you?”

“Oh, thanks——”

“Unless you are disgusted with roads that are liable to mad bulls,” said Lady Ogle.

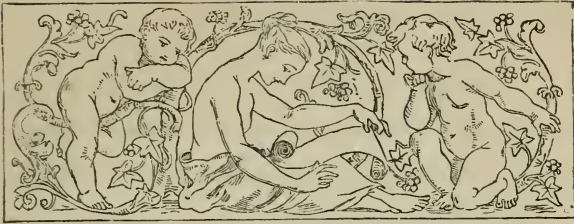
“I am not. I shall come with pleasure.”

In a few moments he took his leave.

Alice managed to prolong his two conventional words of leave-taking of herself into a quite suspicious, quite noticeable colloquy, carried on in a low, inaudible tone.

When Hungerford glanced at Susie on his way out of the door, he found to his surprise that there was a look on her face impossible to dissociate from a heart-ache. A faint shadow of pique, or annoyance, he was prepared for, but not for this.

Yes ; he could not doubt it. To see his admiration and interest bestowed on some one beside herself gave her pain. She might deny it as she would, but he now had the upper hand.



## CHAPTER II.

“ You’ll love me yet, and I can wait  
Your love’s protracted growing.”

**T**HEY say that the heart of a woman has no wrinkles ; that she can love as passionately at five-and-forty as at eighteen.

From these two assertions, is there not the inference to be drawn that she can love and unlove ? That if amatory fetters close about her at forty-five, it is not for the first, but for the second, third, perhaps fourth time ?

Susie was in a state of tantalism.

To remember Eugene now, was but to clash her little white teeth together, grow red in the dark or all alone, involuntarily contract her dark eyebrows, and clench her fingers ; perhaps mutter a word or two to herself.

To think of Hungerford brought a sigh, a flower-like bend of the head, a pensive tracing of some invisible word with the point of a non-marking object, like a paper-knife or umbrella. It made Alice a rival, to whom it was hard not to appear as inimical as she felt.

It would have given her pleasure to see Alice appear at breakfast that morning with a chilblain on the end of her nose. But Alice disobligingly swept in, very late, with hues of lily and carnation (both hues being in the right places).

“ I feel hungry for amusement to-day,” said she to Susie. “ I do not know why. Think of something to mark the day with, Susie.”

“What would amuse me would not amuse you. For instance : walking about the muddy roads as you did yesterday would not amuse me, but I suppose it did you.”

“He is a very agreeable companion.”

“Well, you can ‘mark the day’ with him, then; of course you remember that he dines here to-night.”

“But until dinner-time?”

“Look at yourself in the glass.”

“Said sentimentally, and by a man, that speech would touch me to the heart. Said by you, it is a Susie-ism.”

Susie laughed. “Said by me, it touches your temper.”

“You make me think of an essay I read a short time ago. The subject of it was an only daughter, of tender years. You, like her, would answer an invitation by saying, ‘Dear Mrs. Blank, I don’t want to come and dine with you to-morrow.—S. Dawnay—would you not?’”

“No.”

“Perhaps you would not answer it at all,” said Alice, calmly, rising and moving towards the door. “Aunt Margaret,” she continued, speaking on the same text when she entered the room where her aunt and Miss Ogle were, “how is it that Susie has not imbibed something of your tone and manner?”

“Because she was born with a separate identity. I suppose, Alice.”

“She might have kept her identity quite distinct, and yet have had manners more like yours”

“I am going to improve,” said Susie.

“I have heard you say that before.”

“Mr. Hungerford thinks that *you* are improved,” said Susie.

“Ah!” said Alice, a little uncomfortably. “You mean me to understand that there was room for improvement.”

“Don’t bicker, dear children,” said Miss Ogle.

“We hardly ever talk to each other in a different way from this,” said Alice, smiling, and seating herself by the fire with her work.

“There was a song you used to sing, that I liked,” said Hungerford to Susie that evening after dinner. “You once refused to sing it when I asked you: will you sing it to-night? It began, ‘When the lamp is shattered.’”

Susie hesitated. “*Alice* sings it,” she began.

Hungerford waited for no more; to her chagrin, he walked straight over to Alice, who, in consenting, regaled him with a look that the right man would have found irresistible. Presently she was seated at the piano with him at her side, turning over her leaves too late or too soon, as men generally do, while Susie was left alone with Gothic longings to break her fan, or Hungerford’s heart.

Having finished her song, Alice still stayed at the piano, and strove to make each word and look effective enough to keep him beside her. When she found by his inattentive manner that she failed to interest him, she changed her tactics, and devised long sentences, which he could not break away from without positive rudeness.

But, alack ! how futile are woman's wiles when practised on the wrong man. Too soon for Alice's self-love not to be wounded, Hungerford went over to Susie, and seated himself beside her. It gave him satisfaction to pique his wilful love, therefore he eschewed it.

"It is not the same song when she sings it," he said, gently.

"No ; I dare say not," rejoined Susie, bitterly ; "she does everything better than I do."

"Do not perversely misunderstand me."

She made no rejoinder.

"When shall we meet again ?" he continued, in the same low, thrilling tone.



“How can I tell?” said Susie, indifferently.

“You can tell me whether you will be in town this spring.”

“Probably for a few weeks in May and June.”

“Will you write me a line, and tell me when you are coming? and where you will be?”

“No; you would think, if I did, that it was to please myself.”

“No; I give you my word I would not. I should only think that it was to please me,” said Hungerford, laughing.

“Now, I distinctly refuse. Do you remember,” she continued, suddenly, “saying to me once that you intended losing sight of me and my career for ever?”

“Yes, certainly. But after events, or rather *non*-events, caused me to change my mind. Now, on the contrary, I intend never to lose sight of you.”

“If you have changed your mind once, why not again?”

“There is no reason. But, nevertheless, I shall not. How will you part from me to-night? Regretfully? gladly? indifferently? Come, tell me.”

“All three,” said Susie.

“Then I want to see the monster in the conservatory again. Come and show it to me.”

“If I come, I shall quarrel; I always feel quarrelsome in the conservatory.”

“I’ll bear the brunt of your temper. Come.”

He rose, and they went away together, Susie prompted by no soft sentimentalism, but by a genuine wish to show him how vexing she could be.

“Susie,” he murmured, as the flowers shut them in with bloomy, perfumy walls, “my dear little love!”—and he confidently took her hand to draw her nearer to him, being misled.

“How dare you!” she cried, flinging his hand away, and turning as if to flee. “I am not——”

“Wait!” he said, authoritatively. “I am determined to put an end to this. You were born for me to love—don’t you remember that I told you so before? Why struggle against your fate? Come, yield now; sooner rather than later——”

“I *never* will,” said Susie, fervently. “I am overwhelmed with joy at actually being able to thwart you! You, who have had everything lavished on you! How women must have made you over-rate yourself, for you to say such a senseless thing as that! I remember it grated on me when you said it before. Born for you to love! Fate! What a *young* thing for a man over thirty to say! Why, even *I* would not make such a raw speech.”

“Stop!” he cried, eagerly; “you are disenchanting me. For Heaven’s sake do not go on!”

“I am glad that I am,” said she, but her face did not show much self-felicitation. “Be more disenchanted! Tell me what I can say to make you believe that I think you not a bit better, handsomer, or cleverer than other men.”

“You have said quite enough,” he answered, coldly.

“Struggle against my fate! what senseless nonsense!” cried Susie, getting involved in her excitement.

Hungerford’s lip twitched risibly.

“Next door to a double negative,” he said, “and two negatives make an affirmative, as, of course, you learnt only the other day.”

“But you quite understand what I meant,” said she, growing calmer as her anger deepened.

“No, I do not; it is what I wish to do, or, rather, I wish to know what you feel. Do you relinquish me? Now—here? Or

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is roused temper making you speak in a way you may afterwards regret?"

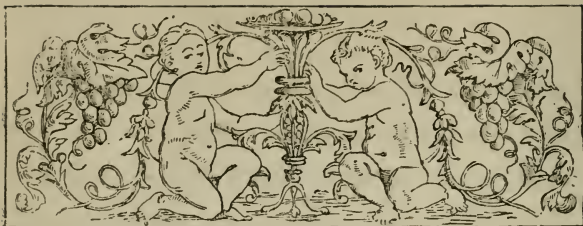
"I *shan't* regret it," said Susie, as if he had asserted that she would. Fortunately she had not a vixenly voice. It was clear, sweet, and young, always.

"Good-bye, then," said Hungerford, austerely, and holding out his hand as an acquaintance would.

"Good-bye," she faltered, an entirely new set of emotions rushing in to take the place of those that had just been swaying her. She waited for one other less sundering word, but it did not come. Hungerford walked quietly away, and left her standing there.

She felt as if the ground had suddenly been cut away from under her feet.

"He said good-bye," she whispered, with rising sobs; "he said *good-bye!*"



### CHAPTER III.

“ Each life’s unfulfilled, you see ;  
It hangs still patchy and scrappy.”

R. BROWNING.

**A**ND so Susie became the victim of her own ingenuity—her ingenuity in eluding happiness.

She did not see Hungerford again, for he left the island, and drifted away from her ken.

He allowed her to be effectually out of the scope of his influence, but he must have laid some fettering “sentiment intime” on her, for she was constantly wishing to

forget him; yet, strange to say, twin-born with the wish, was the thought that she would soon see him again in London, and that the flawless gentleness of her manners should win him into having a different opinion of her from the one he now had. She arranged a scene with him in her mind, where her behaviour was of a quite ideal grace and sweetness—altogether too ideal for her ever to act up to, poor Susie! She saw the expression of his face when he should find that she had improved into the mildest conventionalism; she spoke in his part as well as her own, in the fashion people have when they give imagination the rein, putting words into his mouth, even thoughts into his mind.

Alice went home again, and Cora. Miss Ogle returned to ——. Susie idled away her life, and exercised her emotions by loving her mother, learning to love her stepfather, quarrelling with herself, and hating the canary birds.

She counted the days dividing her from London, for Sir Alfred had arranged to go up the middle of April. But sinewy Circumstance stepping in, showed her that it was of no use to count the days any more ; of no use to arrange a set of future events for herself, which would never transpire.

Sir Alfred's fireside is made too attractive to him. He neglects taking the out-door exercise he has been accustomed to, and the result is a sharp attack of illness.

The doctor who is sent for from London pronounces a long sea-voyage to be the thing for him.

Sir Alfred, who dreads unspeakably being summoned into the dark, succumbs—as many men do—to unreasonable terrors. His liver grows more closely dear to him than aught else in life. He would do anything, go anywhere, for its sake. It is settled that he shall take it across the ocean to America ; and before Susie quite realizes



it, the time is upon them when they are to leave England's sad skies and capricious May days. Leave the humid mildness of the little island : leave the fields all starred with wild flowers, and full of the music of blithe bird voices. The 20th of May found them sailing from Liverpool in one of the Allan steamers.

Their tour was mapped out with the greatest precision, Sir Alfred having no idea of allowing travelling and wandering to mean the same thing. It was not in him to learn that wandering is the pleasantest sort of travelling. They were to go from Quebec to Portland, and from Portland through Maine and the lovely White Mountains of New Hampshire, on as far as Lake George, from Lake George to the Falls of Niagara, then across Lake Ontario, down the St Lawrence to Quebec again, and so home.

Their voyage across was the usual disagreeably mixed collection of discomforts,

and their arrival in Quebec marked by the not uncommon sense of wishing they had stayed on the other side of the water. Then the novelties of the new world, seen so often through the eyes of others, began to crowd in upon them, and they went on through the brilliant summer with right good will.

On their way from Portland to Gorham they stopped a day at Bethel, a spot so complete in its wild beauty that Susie forgot all her senses but her eyes. She had no idea that she was a Nature worshipper, until thus placed face to face with the rugged grandeur of that granite region, where the wild and rapid Androscoggin dashed over its boulders to the sea, and where jagged summits cut the tender blue of the sky with harsh pale outlines, unsoftened by tree or shrub.

They travelled on through the unconventional land, looked down through cloud rifts

on toy villages and silver ribbon rivers from the top of Mount Washington; peeped shudderingly at the Rattlesnakes-ledge of Mount Kearsarge. Not only saw the home of the "critters," but on coming down watched a man killing one with a hoe in a field at the foot of the mountain.

He brought it to the fence hanging over his hoe for them to see, its black and yellow ugliness dangling inertly in the bright June sunshine. Never would it coil and spring again. It had eight rattles. It was no young snakeling, but an "accursed" well stricken in years.

The man cut the rattles off, and with polite generosity offered them to Susie, who screamed, and accepted them. They were dry and clean as wooden button moulds, and had a husky, faint rattle. They were thrown into the back of the country wagon the Ogles were in at the time, and Sir Alfred preserved them with care.

When rails failed them, they drove in the light ugly conveyances of the country through Conway, Four Corners, Jackson, and many other straggling white villages with quaint names, and the grand adjuncts of granite scar and rolling river and smooth green interval, and pine forest sombre and still.

There, where manners are genial and voices nasal, and food disgusting, and horses half broken and driven with the snaffle; roads, the jostling corduroy or the jolting stony way that tries the nerves and frets the temper, where frail wooden bridges tremble over the water giant beneath them who tussles with his granite boulders, and seethes and swirls round fallen pine logs, as he goes hurrying sea-ward or lake-ward. A wonderful land, with its primordial granite grandeur, its rugged beauty which the hand of man can never mar, its forests where one can wander for hours in aromatic shade.

---

One Saturday evening, just at sunset, our travellers arrived at Foxborough, on the banks of Lake Winnepesaukee, where they intended stopping for a few days, as this would be the end of their journeying in the North Eastern States. There was what was called a hotel, and as they drove to it Susie remembered that it was from this place that Mr. Van Vleck had come. It was here Léontine came when her home in Louisiana was broken up.

Thoughts, memories, fragments of conversation, crowded into Susie's brain thick and fast, as they jolted down the straggling village street.

From the two meeting houses standing almost opposite each other, issued the wail of harmoniums and the sound of drawling nasal voices singing high-pitched hymns. It was the usual Saturday night practising that was going on. The hotel was like all the houses they passed, glaringly white,

with green outside blinds ; it was as large as two of the houses turned into one. From the open window of a house over the way came out the prolonged chords of a "seraphim" which to-morrow would accompany the singing of stern old Puritan psalms.

They alighted at the door of the hotel. On the railing of the veranda that shaded the front of the house was seated a child, singing a hymn tune at the top of her shrill treble voice.

"Down by the saw-mill dam  
There this child was drowned slam ;  
Black water and white head,  
There this child was drowned  
Stone dead,"

sang she, setting an authentic epitaph to her tune. Susie, on hearing the incongruous words, went off in a fit of laughter. The child's young voice was silenced.

Their rooms were scrupulously neat, and

as to furniture, rather scrimped. At nine o'clock Susie, quite tired out, laid herself down in her bare, clean chamber, on a bed of odorous hazel shavings. But weary as she was, she could not sleep. Her mind was full of the people who had been actors in the little *vaudeville* of her life. For distracting as is travel in a far away land, it cannot prevent the memories that are life tenants of a mind reviving, any more than sprinkling camphor on the fur wherein the moth is already nestled, can prevent the worm from gnawing.

As the night wore on, strange birds, whose notes she had never heard or even imagined before, filled the empty stillness full of sound. A whip-poor-will sent forth its lamentable cry, a night hawk screamed as only a thing that pounces savagely can scream. A loon came and perched on the fence just outside her window and laughed its jarring maniac laugh, until, trembling

with terror, she got up and looked out; and, half expecting to see a fiend vanish in blue flame, saw only a bird fly away on white wings through the pale half-moonlight.

A screech-owl shrilling past did not after that disturb her composure, and as its last harsh cry died away she fell asleep.





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CAMP-MEETING.

**T**HERE was only a big buck-wheat field between her and the lake, Susie discovered the next morning, when she went to her back window. The water lay there in its twinkling blue and gold gaudiness, shut in by the everlasting hills.

From mid-air came the sound of her own name, sung over and over again to the dolefullest psalm tune that ever was heard.

“Miss Dorny, Dorny, Dor, Miss Dorny, Dor.”

Susie leaned out, and looking carefully about her, discovered at last the child who had been singing on the veranda the evening before, and who now was swinging aloft on the gnarled bough of a quince tree.

“Little girl,” said Susie, “what is your name?”

The child, twisting her arms round another bough, stopped singing, peered down, and answered, with Republican directness and freedom from shyness:—

“Margot Mudgett. I live here always. This is mother’s house.”

From which Susie gathered that Margot Mudgett was her landlady’s daughter.

“Don’t you,” said she, leaning her elbows comfortably on the sill, “don’t you know any psalm words for your psalm tunes?”

“I forgit ’em,” answered Margot.

“Then don’t you know any tunes that are not psalm tunes, and that have words to suit them?”

“I know ‘John Brown’s body lies a-mouldering in the grave.’”

“Oh, dear!” said Susie, shrugging her shoulders. “What else do you know? Don’t you know any funny little songs, like ‘Up in a balloon?’”

Margot shook her head.

“What a pious child!” thought Susie. Aloud: “And I suppose you are going to church by-and-by?”

Margot’s face kindled.

“No,” she said with emphatic relish. “I’m going to camp-meeting.”

Susie knit her brows in perplexity.

“Where is that?” she hazarded.

“Over thar’,” answered Margot, pointing straight out to the middle of the lake.

“What? Among the fishes?” said Susie, smiling.

Margot was not offended. She looked pityingly at the lady for whom old world education had done so little as to leave

her in ignorance of what camp-meeting was.

“It is on an island,” she answered, her wizened little face puckering into a smile.

“Oh, I see!” said Susie; “and what do they do at camp-meeting?”

“They preach, and scream, and git converted, and sing, and groan. My! How their souls must hurt when they come over to grace; it makes ’em groan so.”

“How lively it sounds!” said Susie half to herself. “I must see it.”

She withdrew herself from the window and joined her mother and Sir Alfred at the breakfast-table, which was invitingly spread with Washington pie, sweet pickles, corn-bread, yellow as a guinea, dough-nuts, and stewed barbaries.

“Pray let us go to this camp-meeting out in the lake,” she said, jumping into the subject at once. “On an island in the lake, I mean,” she added. “The little girl is

going from here. Oh, do let us go and hear them sing and preach in the open air."

Sir Alfred allowed that it was always interesting to learn the "special observances, customs, usages, of a country," and would Susie ring the bell, that he might make inquiries.

The bell was rung, and Mrs. Mudgett herself made her appearance. She was a lady whose figure suggested her having been cut out of a shingle, and whose complexion made one draw unpleasant inferences from the Washington pie and sweet pickles.

There was a steamer, it seemed, expressly to take people to the island. Abigail was going to take Margot (Abigail, she explained, was one of her hired help).

"For my part," Mrs. Mudgett said, with a toss of the head, "I want no camp-meetin's. Meetin's in the Meetin'-house

suit my ideas best. But 'tis worth seeing for once," she added; "and I wouldn't say that the spirit of the Lord wasn't there. But, to my notion, there's as much playin' as prayin', cursin' as blessin', drinkin' as singin'—towards the last," she amended. "For the first day or two the spirit is willinger than the flesh is weak; but on the third and fourth the flesh seems for to get sot ag'in the spirit, and they eat and drink, and make merry, most of 'em, as if their souls was gone for good and all, and only their bodies left. The steamboat leaves the wharf at ten o'clock. All you have to do if you want to go is to git aboard."

Sir Alfred, who had congealed under the influence of the woman's loquacity, thawed after she had left the room, and expressed his willingness to go.

"It will be a delightful sail, at all events," he said, "provided that we are not

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incommoded by an excited throng of religious fanatics—who'll act like the Dickens."

Susie ran away to get ready. And behold them, at a quarter past ten o'clock, beginning to steam over the intensely blue water of the lake towards the island, which lay like a dull bit of malachite amongst glittering sapphires.

They followed the stream of people from the rudest of all rude landing-places, along a wild pathway fringed with blue-berry bushes, flannel-like mulleins, tall thistles, bushes of crimson-leaved sumach, to a balmy pine-forest, where, among the flickering bars of sunshine that entered like intruders between the branches, grew the checker-berry, and the creeping-Jenny, and the fern; and where strange bright mosses, damp and soft, made little oases in the uniform yellow grey of the pine-needle carpet.

It was like going from a ball-room into a cathedral.

The trees grew so close together that there was a light, sombre and yet rich, as that which half reveals, half shrouds a shrine.

Little chip-munks frisked with bushy, arched tails over fallen tree-trunks, and kept Sunday as they kept week days. There was a scent so penetrating, so unforgettable, so distinct from every other sweet savour, that it might have belonged to one of the Islands of the Blest. In the middle of this aromatic haunt of the adder, and the squirrel, and the melancholy whip-poor-will, there was a natural amphitheatre, where a clearing had been made, and where numbers of wooden seats had been placed to front a rude rostrum, now occupied by a man whose high, quivering voice, raised in excitement, resounded through the solemn aisles of pine and hemlock, and in frenzied



tones told of the worm that dieth not, the fire that is never quenched, the downward falling in the bottomless pit that is to last for ever more.

“Down, down, down!” cried the preacher, writhing himself backwards, and interlacing his bony fingers.

And the hearers groaned, and from groaning broke into a wild hymn, whose cadence, rising and falling mournfully, drowned the preacher’s voice. Other sound to drown was there none ; for the heaviest footfall sank noiselessly on the slippery carpet of pine needles. There was only the soft susurrus of the branches that melted into the sin-dirge like another voice, faint, sad, and ethereal. Hard by, rough shanties had been run up, and here the camp-meeting folk ate, and slept, and sheltered themselves.

They were open to all, as the forest was. Curiously, Susie followed her mother and

Sir Alfred, and walked over their loose plank floors. Partitions with great chinks between the boards separated room from room. Doorways with curtains of coloured calico hanging over them exposed quaint interiors to exploring eyes.

In one there were two girls. The first, crouched on a mattress, her knees drawn up so that her cheek rested on them, wailed of her conviction of sin, and groaned out spasmodically her terror of Tophet, and the lake of brimstone. The other, seated on a little old hair trunk, was combing her long yellow hair, and as she combed she sang exultantly.

She had experienced religion, and felt assured of her safety.

In another room a baby was crying ; its mother, as she rocked it, read aloud, in a murmuring voice, verses from a worn Bible she held in her hand.

In another, men were groaning, drinking,

shouting. In another, a wild looking fellow, starting forward, warning them to flee from the wrath to come.

Sir Alfred, horrified, hurried them out, and back again to the meeting.

They had stopped singing. And the preacher had fallen from his frenzied tone into one of ghastly solemnity, and was continuing his discourse.

Sir Alfred, looking with fastidious curiosity through his eye-glass, pronounced judgment on the "unbridled zealots" in culled phrases.

"Religion," murmured Lady Ogle, bending down her golden head. "Well, who knows? There may be honest religion in their frantic appeals, and coarse thoroughness of self-condemnation."

As Susie drew near to the platform she gave a sharp exclamation, for the man who was now making capital of the terrors of Death, was the same man who, two years

ago, had been making capital of the joys which were to be gained by dying.

“Sir Alfred,” she said, laying her hand on her step-father’s arm, “that man who is preaching is uncle to the girl your nephew married.”

“Good Gad !” said Sir Alfred, stepping back and dropping his eye-glass. “You do not mean it ! The girl herself may be here ; and Eugene ! Let us go. I cannot be brought face to face with that fellow’s egregious folly.”

“We cannot go until the boat goes,” returned Susie, “it does not go for half an hour yet.”

Her eyes were roving restlessly from face to face, from seat to seat.

“At all events,” said Sir Alfred, “we can take our departure from this scene of religious revelry. We can go to a part of the island where the familiarities of their revival hymns will not reach us, and where

we shall be much less likely to meet—any one. Take my arm, my dear.”

They sauntered away, turning their backs on the wild assemblage — on the agitated faces, on the groans and ejaculations, on the trumpeting voice of the preacher. They wandered away quite to the other side of the island, where the trees dwindled into mere underbrush; where the waters of the lake softly advanced and retreated on a miniature beach of fragile golden shells that could be broken between the finger and thumb.

A wild cherry-tree grew close to the water's edge, and a slender white birch or two. In the middle distance were the low green hills; in the distance the white cleft peak of Chocorua, and over all the June sun shed a generous light, that made the waters superlatively blue, the hills shadowless in their emerald undulations.

“Look!” cried Susie, suddenly pointing

to a smooth green slope on their right ;  
“some one has been laid there to sleep  
their last sleep.”

It was a lonely grave, its head-stone gleaming white and new in the mid-day sunshine. No tree was near it, no enclosure of any sort marked it round ; but it looked a peaceful spot wherein to await, confined and unfleshed, the call of the Resurrection Angel.

“ I will go and read the name on it,” said Susie, and stole away.

The others seated themselves on the warm, dry ground, and watched her taking her way to the velvet knoll that held

“ A worn out fetter that the soul  
Had broken and thrown away.”

They saw her go up to the stone with gentle footsteps, saw her sink suddenly on her knees, as she read the name upon it.

In an instant she beckoned to them ; they had already risen, and they made their way

between the blue-berry bushes, and the mulleins, over to the clear grassy space where she was.

“ Here lies Eugene’s Léontine,” she cried, tearlessly, yet in a moved voice. “ She is dead. *She is dead!* She is lying here all alone,—and she was hardly any older than I am.”

Sir Alfred, bending down, read the inscription on the stone.

“ Was she—ahem—so very handsome ?” he said, in a voice the reverse of stern.

Susie did not reply.

Eugene’s Léontine, sleeping quietly, awoke not at the sound of voices and footsteps above her lonesome bed ; Death had abased her beauty, and silenced her clear voice, and benumbed her passionate heart.

A few short months ago she could have been a living, breathing answer to the baronet’s question. Now she must lie dumb, and let her rival answer for her.

“Poor Léontine,” murmured Susie, hiding her face in her hands. “When the winter comes, Mèry”—turning her hidden face towards her mother—“it will be so desolate here.”

“The sun will shine on her, Susie.”

“But when it is stormy, and the rain drives, and the water beats against the stones——”

“She will not hear it.”

Nestling on Susie’s breast was a perfect white rose, gathered that morning. She drew it out of the onyx pin that fastened it, and laid it on the narrow green mound.

“And was she very handsome?” repeated Sir Alfred.

“Handsome? No; she was beautiful; beautiful as a rose in its ‘burning prime.’ Sleep well, Léontine.”





## CHAPTER V.

### THE ISLAND IN THE LAKE.

**T**HE moon, rising passionately red, to set passionlessly pale, sent quivering gleams across the water, and touched the pale headstone with an opaline light. The camp-meeting still went groaning, ranting, singing on.

From a house on the island that was an actual local habitation, with substantial walls, and a garden, and a comfortable home-like look, a man's tall, slight figure issued, as the moon-rays shook over the water. The wild voices in the distance

floated through the still night air, and reached him, confused and faint.

He walked away in an opposite direction to them, going down towards the beach, where a few hours before Susie and her mother and step-father had stood. At every step the sound of the voices in the distance grew fainter and fainter, until at last it was lost altogether.

He bent his steps over to the last resting-place of the woman who had been his wife, and, with a quiet face, stood looking down at it.

There was only to be heard the tranquillizing sound of the water incoming and outgoing gently over the little frail shells, and the sigh of the pines that stood a few yards off.

The white rose caught his eye.

“Laid there,” thought he, “by some of these camp-meeting people, who have strayed over by chance. How kind people

are to graves, especially women. No woman would have given a rose to Léontine living, but they are willing enough to lay it on the sod that covers her dead beauty."

A whip-poor-will's note came from the neighbouring woods, eerie and penetrating. He was glad to hear it; it seemed to leave her less lonely, this creedless, luckless, lifeless one. He stood there with arms folded, musing, thinking of himself and of her.

He had found out the meaning of the word "work" since he came to the great Republic, had Everard. He had discovered that Jordan was a "hard road to travel," but he had travelled it, nevertheless, with feet that never faltered.

He and Léontine and Van Vleck had lived on this island, and in this wooden house, with its shingle roof and blue blinds, ever since they came over, for the whole island was theirs. Mr. Van Vleck had

laughed at the idea of gold-diggings, and straight as the crow flies had gone to his old home, where, as he said, he was known, and if he was played out when he left, he had been dealt a fresh hand now, and could go on with the game.

Just opposite, on the mainland, was a saw-mill, and this, too, Eugene's money had hired. The whirr of its great steel blade went on all day long, and it was partly fed by the pine trees felled on the island. These, bound into rafts, were floated over the narrow strip of lake to the mill, to be sawn into planks, and all the lumber men about there brought him their logs to be shaped for building purposes. This was how Eugene made his daily bread, and he made quite enough of it to be of a cheerful countenance and a well-nourished frame.

His mill stood in a spot of poetic beauty, surrounded by young maples, that in autumn blazed with every conceivable

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shade of red, its wheel turned by a rushing water-course that emptied itself into the lake. The air used to be full of the resinous, wholesome scent of the saw-dust, and the unceasing whirr of the circular saw had a busy, prosperous sound.

Van Vleck became converted, and turned into a Methodist, a fisher of souls, and spoke at revival meetings far and near, and was a bright and shining light; a very torch-light when the yearly camp-meeting came round, and meeting was held here in the heart of his and Eugene's pine wood.

The long, hard winter came. The bitter winds raged round their island home. The snow weighed down the stately crests of the pine-trees, and covered the sweet-scented carpet of needles with a cold and spotless completeness.

Léontine, "a summer bird in a winter land," faded and drooped from day to day, watching the sands of life retreating with a

dumb patience. There was no keen regret in her ; life had been but a troubled sea to her, casting up mire and dirt, and the wild passion of her young husband had proved but an ephemeral thing that changed into a relation cooler than friendship. Having lost his love, life did not seem much to lose—for she had grown to adore him—she relinquished her feeble hold of it one night, when the snow drove like an army of ghosts through the icy air, and there was no sound to be heard in the darkness but the sobbing of the water as the stony shore repulsed it.

She had been gasping out broken memories of her childish days. Her sick mind wandered back to the sunshine, and warmth, and glowing beauty of her southern home through the frozen darkness of a northern midnight. Eugene's heart ached to hear her. She babbled of the *bayou* where the lilies floated, and called faintly to the pet

mocking bird that was long since dead ; she chased a slave panting through orange alleys, and called "Zoe! Zoe!" Zoe was a free woman now, and would never be chased by an imperious child mistress any more. She muttered, half in Spanish, half in French, half in English, of the scorching rays of the sun she would never see again. And the last name on her lips was not that of the husband bending over her, or of father or mother, but it was the name of the slave-girl associated with days long past. She raised herself slightly: "Zoe, do come!" she said, fretfully, and so died.

Her death unsettled Eugene as much as it saddened him. He felt now that there was nothing to hold him in America, yet the thought of returning to England was galling to him, for now that his uncle had married, things could never be the same again. The golden-haired widow had supplanted him, and she and her daughter,



even if there were not other children, would probably one day possess that which he had been used to consider himself the inheritor of.

As he stood there in the mild moonlight by his wife's grave, it seemed to him that it must be the life of some other man which was passing in review before him ; its pleasures snapped short off, its worldly hopes dissolved, its smooth current forced aside into a rough, devious channel, and all by his own deliberate act. An act which had remained a hidden deed such a little while, in its exposure bringing on him its worst consequences.

He turned away, and walked slowly towards the frame house that gleamed sepulcrally white in the moonlight, and entering the room where they usually sat, waited for Van Vleck to come.

Thrown in constant contact with Van Vleck, he had grown to like him warmly.



There were many things dislikable about him, of course, yet notwithstanding, for his own comfort, he preferred to overlook them, and see only those better qualities that shone out well in the long hours and days of Léontine's sickness unto death.

Their one servant had gone to groan and sing in the woods. The house was perfectly still. Eugene lighted the kerosene lamp and his pipe, and sat there idly, occupied with his own thoughts.

It was not until nearly midnight that Van Vleck made his appearance. He had shouted himself hoarse, and was not able to speak above a husky whisper. He came into the room and touched Eugene on the shoulder.

“Everard,” he croaked, “who do you think I saw from my platform to-day, as I was speaking?”

Eugene shook his head to express his inability of guessing.

“The little Miss Dawnay.” He felt Eugene’s shoulder stir electrically. “There were a lady and gentleman with her, I noticed—an elderly gentleman. Perchance your uncle and his wife.”

“Most likely,” answered Eugene, briefly. “And what were they doing? They came over in the ten o’clock boat to go back at one, I suppose?”

“My mind was soaring at the moment above mundane things,” answered Mr. Van Vleck, somewhat sanctimoniously. “Having marked them, I then lost sight of them. If they caught any of my humble words, I hope they were of some benefit to their immortal souls.”

“I hope so, I am sure,” responded Eugene, with the tact and tolerance that never failed him.

“Eugene,” said Van Vleck, clearing his throat, and trying to make his voice more efficient, “you’re not the fellow to be a

saw-miller daöwn east here. Very like your uncle is at Foxboro', making the tour of the mountains. Go over there to-morrow morning, and tell him you are a free man again, and take up your life as an English gentleman."

"But, Van Vleck," said Eugene, a little bitterly, "I haven't anything but my ninety pounds a year to be an English gentleman on. My uncle having married a wife without my consent, and cast me off because he discovered that I had married one without his consent, I have nothing more whatever to expect of him, you see. I think I had better saw the logs of the Yankees, and go on living here with you. I am independent, and am making enough to keep my soul in prison. I should like very well to see Sir Alfred again, only to make him distinctly understand that I expect nothing, hope nothing, want nothing from him, and that I am getting on pretty

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well on my own hook. I think he will be agreeably surprised to find me in whole garments, and with an unpawned watch in my pocket. Perhaps I will go over and look him up to-morrow, just to let him see that I am able to get on without him. You have lost your voice, haven't you? And how about the souls? Has the iron of your words entered into many to-day?"

"There were some first-class conversions," replied Mr. Van Vleck, in a business-like tone. "Thoms, of the blanket factory, has yanked off his sins, and come out clothed in the shining garments of repentance——"

"Hurrah for him!" interrupted Eugene, smiling.

"James Storruck has been brought to see that his heart was as black as his shoe. I left him scrubbing it clean with prayer and supplication down at the foot of a pine-tree."

Eugene fixed his large blue eyes on his companion—they had grown to have a sad and thoughtful look.

“You are thoroughly convinced of all this?” he said. “And yet two years ago you were an advanced Spiritualist.”

“I’m that now, you’d better believe,” said Van Vleck, quickly. “I could make that table you’re setting your elbow on, to tip just as well as ever I could.”

“No doubt,” returned Eugene; “but are you an implicit believer in all this that you preach?”

“Of course I am,” said Van Vleck, helping out his disabled voice by thumping the table emphatically. “I wish I could just convince you.”

“Perhaps you will in time,” rejoined Eugene, rising. “It’s getting awfully late. I think I will turn in.”

“Then,” said Van Vleck, following him, “I am not to lose you, Everard.”

“No,” answered Eugene. “Why should you? We’ll scramble along here together the same as ever.”

And they separated.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE OLD ADAM !

“**T**HINK,” said Eugene, after breakfast the following morning, “that instead of going across to the mill with you, I’ll run over to Foxboro’, and look my uncle up. It dwells on my mind--the thought of showing him that I had it in me not to go to the dogs, as he seemed to feel safe in predicting I would. You’ll see me at the mill some time in the course of the day.”

Mr. Van Vleck nodded, and getting up from the table, went down to the shore,

where he embarked in his centre-board boat, and sailed over the narrow strip of water separating the island on this side from the mainland.

Eugene went by steamer to Foxboro', his mind in a state of turbulent unrest, his heart weighed down by a deep melancholy. He felt home-sick, and shut off from his old, pleasant, sunshiny life for ever.

Upon landing, he took his way along the village street to the little hotel. The stage was just arriving from Conway. Piled on at the back was some luggage, unmistakably English and masculine.

The portmanteau, hat-box, and gun-case revived many memories in Eugene's mind, as such slight things will.

His eye searched among the travellers for the owner of those properties that recalled to him the Albany, the Hansoms of London, dog-carts on their way to country houses.



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Among one or two American men, and a great many pretty, graceful American girls, he found him. And his face was the face of Ranicar Hungerford.

Pale and composed as usual, and with the same look in the dark grey eyes that arrested attention as of old.

In a moment imagination had drawn a sketch of the lover coming to join his betrothed, and enjoy the pleasures of summer travel in a foreign land with her. He did not suggest to himself any other possible reason for Ranicar's presence, than the bitter one of his having won piquante, graceful, candid Susie Dawnay, at last.

His heart had been heavy enough before, but it grew leaden now. He almost determined to make no effort to see Sir Alfred, but to turn and go back to his mill among the maples; his lonely mill, where the bald-head eagle could sometimes

be seen swooping, and near which the sullen brown bear did not fear to stray.

But, with a sudden spring forward, Hungerford caught sight of him. Look and motion were simultaneous.

“I felt sure that I should come across you in the course of my wanderings,” he said, with a smile that drew sharp lines like those of pain about his mouth.

“You might have wandered a very long time without encountering me,” answered Eugene, not offering to shake hands, “as I have cast my lines in places where even the enterprising tourist’s foot does not often stray. I happen to be here this morning because I have heard that Sir Alfred Ogle is in these diggings, and I want to give him a friendly greeting. His wife is a sort of friend of mine, too; I admire her very much. I suppose if they are in the village at all they will be here.

But perhaps you have come to meet them?"

"I am following them," said Ranicar, confidently. "I came over in the next steamer after them."

"Oh!" said Eugene, not knowing what to either say or think. "Let us ask if they are here then, since you do not know," he added, turning away.

Ranicar noticed the deep black band around his hat, and his black neck-tie.

"Dead!" he said to himself, with the bitter certainty that springs from intuition rather than knowledge. "Dead! That girl with her scarlet lips and burning eyes. Of course. He was always lucky. I suppose he succeeded in breaking her heart."

He followed him, to hear what the servant or landlady was telling him.

The veranda and windows were full of people who had assembled to see the stage arrive. A sun-burnt child was seated

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astride the railing by the steps, singing a psalm tune, very slowly, to the words—

“I saw him on his dark blue steed  
A-dusting down the road,  
And pit-a-pat and pit-a-pat  
My little heart it goed.  
But soft I sobbered to myself,  
Though swift his paces be,  
He cannot kite so fast but what  
My heart keeps up with he.”

Sir Alfred Ogle, and Lady Ogle, and Miss Dawnay had taken their departure in the boat from Centre Harbour at eight o'clock that morning, on their way to Lake George.

“Centre Harbour? Where is Centre Harbour? How can I get there? When does the next boat start?” said Ranicar, hurriedly.

“At five, sir.”

“We shall meet, then, on the boat,” said Eugene, with one of his old bright smiles; “for I am so anxious to see my

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good old uncle again that I think I shall enjoy the diversions of the chase as you seem to be doing, and follow him until I overtake him."

The potential elements of Eugene's character were unchanged, and he was capable of vigorous activity still, where his old proclivities were concerned.

"Very well, we shall meet there," said Ranicar, with a dire tameness of repetition, and entered the hotel.

Eugene went back to the island to pack a portmanteau and tell Van Vleck that he should be away for a few days. He felt cheered and energized.

"You remember a man named Hungerford?" he said to Van Vleck. "He is here; evidently in hot pursuit of Miss Dawnay, who was once engaged to him. I met him just now, getting out of the Conway stage. We shall be fellow travellers. You have no idea how pleased

he is"—with a laugh—"to have me. Hi, you fellow! you'll plane your arm if you don't look at what you are about." This to a youth who was trying to do two things at once—hold the board for a patent plane to smooth, and listen to his master at the same time. The patent plane was not particular as to what it operated on, and last week had planed the too careless fingers of a lad to the bone.

Eugene sat still for a few minutes, thinking of how pleasant it would be to have Hungerford question him, or speak to him in a way that would elicit what he could not gratuitously tell. He wished him to know that, injudiciously as he had acted, cast off and supplanted as he had been, forced to rely solely on himself—he who had been an idler for whom failure might safely be presupposed—he had it in him to surmount the difficulties of his position, and be a thriving and prosperous man. In

seeing his uncle, the same thought was uppermost. He could not help but anticipate, as a moment of great reward, the moment when Sir Alfred should discover that the nephew, who was no longer his heir, had inherited the fairy gifts of luck and happy chance, which made him independent.

And Susie? He tried not to think of the combination of delights that he should grasp when he and Susie were thrown together again, with Hungerford raging impotently in the background. It seemed almost too complaisant of circumstance.

Suddenly he sprang up. "And I'll get the start of him!" he exclaimed aloud; "by God, I will! I'll sail over in the boat to Centre Harbour, now, as soon as I can be off, and catch the first train; and I believe they'll be in the very train I'm in. I am always lucky. Reuben"—to the youth who was planing—"put on your coat, and come with me; you must sail her back. Good-

bye, Van Vleck. I'll telegraph to you where I want my portmanteau sent. I shall not waste time in stopping for it."

Reuben put on his coat and hat, and, not sorry to have the outing, followed his master down to where the sail-boat was being dandled softly up and down by the crinkled blue water.

Mr. Van Vleck, too, came down to see his nephew-in-law start. He looked uneasily into the face that had kindled into most animated satisfaction and triumph.

"I see what you're up to," he said, bending down and giving a helping hand to unloose the hawser. "You are going to outwit the fellow; and so forth and so on—Good-bye, Everard."

"Good-bye, Van Vleck," answered Eugene, griping his hand.

"Take care of yourself," shouted Van Vleck, as the boat glided away, careening gently over, Reuben at the helm, Eugene



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sitting easily in the stern, his elbow resting on the boat's side. He gave a bright smile, and nodded his handsome head in reply to this valediction; and Van Vleck watched his glowing face till it grew indistinct; still stood motionless and watched the white-sailed boat dotting the blue beauty of the water. It was not until that, too, grew indistinct and melted into the luminous distance that he moved. Then, with a sigh, he turned, and went back to the mill.



## CHAPTER VII.

MORE SUO.

**W**HEN Hungerford got on board the boat, he looked eagerly amongst the passengers for Eugene. He glanced from right to left, prowled from one part of the boat to another, only to discover at last, beyond a doubt, that Eugene had got the start of him.

Yes, he had ; by the several hours that, in American railway travelling, are equivalent to many half hundreds of miles.

By the time that Ranicar arrived in Centre Harbour, Eugene had overtaken the Ogles.

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They had changed carriages—cars, rather—and had swung over one of the red velvet seats to face the other, as can be done in American cars.

Sir Alfred and his wife sat side by side, Susie on the seat opposite to them.

The train was just moving off, when Eugene, catching sight of his uncle's well-known face, swung himself up, entered the car, and walking along between the seats, paused by theirs, thrilling with eager anticipation.

Susie gave a sharp exclamation, and the blood rushed to her face in a crimson tide. Sir Alfred, observing the direction of her eyes, turned, and confronted his nephew, who stood close at his shoulder.

There was a dead, portentous pause. Eugene was the first to break it.

“I have followed you; this is not a chance meeting,” he said, with a mixture of confidence and hesitation. “I have followed

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you from Foxboro'. Sir Alfred, will you not let me join you, and be with you for a few days? It will be all the same to me where you are going, so that you will permit me to travel with you—be with you. I am quite alone"—glancing down at the black gloves he held in one hand.

"Hum! ha! we know—yes, we quite understand," said Sir Alfred, seeming to be settling with himself what manner he should adopt towards his nephew, and what attitude he should allow Eugene to assume—blue-eyed Eugene, who had been his property, as it were, since he was a child in short frocks.

"You are very welcome to come with us, Eugene," he said, trying to put his words in the splints of stiff dignity, but failing, and before he quite knew it, having his hand wrung by his nephew.

"Now," said Eugene, smiling, and speaking in a moved voice, "I suppose I am per-

mitted to say how do you do to you, Lady Ogle ?” and he held out his hand to her.

Lady Ogle shook hands ; but there was nothing very responsive in her look or gesture.

“ And you ?” continued Eugene, quietly slipping into the place beside Susie, his right hand again outstretched.

Silently she shook hands with him, and they tore along together through the hot, blinding sunshine, and green summer beauty of the land.

Not a word did Eugene say of Hungerford. He began at once—after a single leading question from his uncle—to tell the story of himself. He gave it with tact and moderation, yet with a quiet insistence on the main facts of his independence, his mastery of circumstances, and of his determination for all time to come to rely solely on his own exertions, with no ulterior hope whatever regarding his uncle.

The delightful moment had come. Those three people with whom he wished to stand well, knew what manly completeness he had attained. As for Hungerford, the pleasure of circumventing him counterbalanced that other gratification of self-parade which he had anticipated.

His heart beat high with fulfilled hope ; he glanced at Susie, sitting close by his side. She had been listening attentively to him ; her eyes were still on his face. When their glances met, she did not look away. There was neither ungraciousness nor flattery in those limpid grey irids, but there was nothing to build on, any more than there was anything to baffle.

“And now,” said Eugene, having monopolized the conversation for about half an hour, “let me ask one question, and then be silent. Where are you going? Where” (laughing) “am *I* going, since I am privileged to be a hanger-on for a short time?”

“To Lake George,” answered Lady Ogle, “and then to the Falls of Niagara.”

“But by far the best way,” said Eugene, eagerly, “is to go from here to Boston, from Boston to New York, from New York by boat up the Hudson to Albany, and from Albany go on to Niagara Falls. It is a most uncomfortable *détour*, I have been told, to branch off to Lake George, and the hotel is shockingly extravagant, to say nothing of the air, which is considered very lowering to the tone of the system.”

“Indeed?” remarked Sir Alfred, uneasily.

“Yes,” continued Eugene, conscious that he had “barked the right tree.” “It is the place of all others to avoid, if you are in search of generous, bracing air. Have you been ill, mine uncle?”

“I have had a bad attack of the liver,” answered Sir Alfred, “and it has brought in its train all the trammels to enjoyment

that weak health brings. I am obliged to remember the air I breathe, the food I eat, the exercise I take——”

“Then don’t go to Lake George,” broke in Eugene, “by no means go. The food is bad at the hotel, and the air very relaxing. I am sure you will do better to take the route I have just mentioned.”

“I think,” said Sir Alfred, turning to his wife, “that as the air of Lake George is insalubrious, and the accommodation inferior, we cannot do better than go as Eugene proposes, making our terminus the Falls of Niagara.”

“Very well,” said Lady Ogle, quietly. “I will do just as you like, and we have our tickets to Albany, so that it is no great change after all.”

“It is immaterial to you, Susie?” said Sir Alfred, appealing to his step-daughter.

“I should have liked to see Lake George ;



I am fond of lakes ; but it does not matter, of course."

"You will see Lake Ontario," said Sir Alfred, "and you have just seen that one with the unpronounceable name."

"And you can see Lake Erie, it is only an hour's journey from the falls, I believe," interpolated Eugene, turning and looking at her.

He expected to see Susie pout and frown as she used to do, but she had given up her extreme mobility of countenance amongst other things appertaining to her childhood.

She only looked out of the window silently, and Sir Alfred, willing in his secret heart to have his nephew with him once more, talked—talked interminably, Susie thought, his voice sounding thin and strained, above the clanking and grinding of the iron wheels.

They travelled on as proposed. From

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Boston (where Eugene found his portemanteau, which he had telegraphed to have sent there) to New York, from New York up the Hudson, between tree-clothed villa-dotted banks, or pale cliffs beetling and bare, at whose foot could be seen darting along, like brilliant snakes, long trains of cars painted brightest orange or vermilion.

It was the most beautiful of evenings. The water was dyed in flaming streaks, like the face of an Indian brave. Susie, leaning over the bulwarks, gazed about her, drinking in the balmy air like a chameleon. At a little distance off stood Sir Alfred, actually engaged in conversation with a fellow passenger. Lady Ogle was in her own cabin.

Eugene, Susie had seen a moment ago drawing his first whiff of a long Havanna, and she had quite calculated on its taking him fifteen minutes to finish it. She disliked the smell of cigar smoke ; therefore it would not be obtruded on her.

But seeing her standing alone he flung the just lighted cigar into the water, and came towards her. It was the first time he had had her to himself since he had joined his uncle.

He leaned his elbows on the bulwarks as she was doing.

“How little I thought,” he began with a sentimental inflection, “a few days ago at this time, when I was sitting in my lonely saw-mill——”

Susie threw back her head and burst into a fit of unrestrained laughter.

“‘Down by the saw-mill dam,  
There this child was drowned slam.’

“Oh, how I wish I could remember the rest of it,” said she.

“What *are* you talking about?” he asked in the aggrieved tone of a man who asks for redress rather than information.

“Why at Foxboro’, at the hotel, there

was a little girl who was continually singing the most *ticklingly* funny words to solemn psalm tunes."

"I know her," rejoined Eugene, trying hard to fit himself to her mood. "I saw her there sitting astride the balcony railing. She was singing then, something about

"I saw him on a bright blue steed  
A-dusting down the road."

"Oh, I never heard that," said Susie; "can't you remember the rest of it?"

"No," he replied, abandoning the attempt to suit his humour to hers, "I cannot. Tell me, were you glad to see me again?"

"Yes, tolerably glad," said Susie, her life-policy of honesty never failing her.

"Tolerably glad!" he repeated, striving not to let the vexation he was willing to show outweigh the astonishment which he preferred to hide. "*I am intolerably glad to see you. Tolerably glad!* I did not

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think even *you* would be so caustic as that!"

"I am delighted to hear of your prosperity and success," said Susie. "And I am as glad to see you as it is necessary for me to be. I am enjoying my journey so intensely that nothing or nobody could add very much to my pleasure. An artist or a poet might."

"But I am neither," Eugene went on for her, endeavouring to speak indifferently. "Well, you'll not be troubled with my presence long. I shall leave you at the Falls of Niagara. It will be better for you *on every account* that I should go."

Susie looked at him with an inquiring frown.

"I am conceited enough," continued Eugene, with a watchful smile, "to feel that my uncle would miss me if he grew accustomed to my companionship again. You see, he and I are very old friends."

Susie could not, would not believe that he intended a detestable insinuation by his soft, slow words.

“It is no concern of mine whether you go or stay,” she said crisply. “That must be between your uncle and yourself.”

“Do you want me, Susie?”

“I care nothing about it.”

“You would not have answered with such wounding indifference once.”

“Perhaps not. Now I am going to be very frank. You seemed to forget one morning—the last morning I saw you—that I had moral susceptibilities (I have been treasuring up those two words, I heard them in a sermon), and I have not been able to forget that you forgot. There, if you can make sense out of that jumbled speech you understand me.”

The dull red of Eugene’s face showed that he did understand the drift of her sentence, ill-constructed though it was.

“I acknowledge that I forgot myself,” he said, looking awkward, but not self-convicted in the least. “I know that I have been wanting in—in self-restraint once or twice”—he was floundering sadly. “But you will forgive me?”

There was the true ring of urgent appeal in these last words.

“Oh, willingly,” answered Susie, with fatal readiness. “*Willingly*” (with still more fatal kindliness). “Now let us talk about something else.”

“Wait a moment before we change the subject. Are you willing to *forget* my short-comings, as well as to forgive them?”

“I am perfectly *willing* to forget them,” answered she; “but forgiveness comes at will, forgetfulness does not. One cannot forget, even if one would. That is the worst of it.”

“But we are to be friends?” said Eugene, trying to infuse into his words the very

essence of all that was flattering, imploring, impassioned.

“We can be friends after a fashion,” said Susie. “I will always be civil to you, and you can be civil to me, or not, just as you please.”

“That is ‘after a fashion,’ indeed,” said the young man, laughing bitterly. “You *can* be blunt, can you not?”

“I have never,” answered Susie, “met any one blunter than myself. And,” laughing with all the jocularly he was wanting in, “never wish to do so.”

“Nor do I,” said he, blightingly.

“But I have improved,” said Susie, moving away towards the gangway. “I do not interrupt people now half as much as I once did. And if I do, I am horribly conscience-smitten. I am a much better listener, and I think I can adapt myself to people better. Sir Alfred has grown quite fond of me.”



“I know he has,” said Eugene, a singular look coming over his face. “I see it. Come, you are talking like your old self. Do not go down.”

“Oh! but yes,” said Susie, shortly. “I am going down to enjoy the scenery with mamma, out of her cabin window,” and she moved carelessly away.

Eugene returned to his old place, and stared stolidly at the bright, full-coloured scene about him.

“What a mess I have made of my life,” muttered he. “I seem to have lost my foothold everywhere!”

Susie made her way to her mother’s “state-room.”

Lady Ogle was leaning out of her little window, the curtain flapping and fluttering over her fair head.

“Mother,” said Susie, shutting the door behind her, and doubling herself up backwards into the berth like a joint doll.

“Mother, I have not asked you yet what you think of this sudden appearance of Mr. Everard, and of having him join us?”

Lady Ogle turned her face inwards. She could not elude the thought that Eugene, restored to his uncle's favour, might be detrimental in the future to her daughter's fortunes and her own. But she put away the idea as ignoble, contemptible, mercenary—to be checked, not to be harboured.

“Provided that you and he do not flirt with one another, I am perfectly willing to have him,” she said, quietly.

“There is no more danger of that,” returned Susie, “than there is of the Wars of the Roses happening again.”

(This figure of speech being suggested because she was holding a red rose and a white in her hand, kissing them, sniffing at them, as she talked.)

“How cleverly he mastered the situa-

tion," continued Susie. "How quietly he slipped in among us. How easily he made it seem [a matter of course. How he made Sir Alfred yield to his pleasant suasion!"

"He is perfect in tact and finesse," acquiesced Lady Ogle.

"Not always," said Susie, musingly. "Men have a strange doubleness, I think."

"Sage!" cried Lady Ogle, laughing. "Solomon! Your experience of men has been so wide, so varied."

"He will only be with us a few days longer; he intends leaving us at the Falls of Niagara," said Susie, disregarding her mother's playful depreciation.

"He says so, I suppose," rejoined Lady Ogle, shrugging her shoulders. "I would not be at all astonished if we now found Master Eugene anything but a 'movable feast.'"

"You do not think that he will come

back to England with us?" said Susie, in alarm.

"I should not be surprised if he did, notwithstanding that he has paraded his independence, and his determination to continue independent, so persistently. His wife, by dying, benefited him in the best way she could possibly have done."

They were silent for a moment. Both knew that half a dozen words judiciously chosen and spoken by Lady Ogle, would effectively bar Eugene out from his uncle's favour and presence. Not to speak them would be a triumph of magnanimity. To speak them would lead to a self-advantageous result, and would, after all, be only a fair requital of evil—only make it more imperative that Eugene should keep in the road he had himself chosen, follow straightforwardly the plough to which he had put his hand. It would not be selecting a path for him, nor insisting on his turning the furrow against his will.

“Fortunately,” said Lady Ogle, gaugingly, “you soon found him out?”

“Yes, fortunately,” replied her daughter, emerging from her retreat, stretching her arms and yawning.

The yawn, which was evidently refreshing, was conclusive.

“We are to have some sort of repast at 7.30,” added Susie. “I am going into my cabin to ‘adorn the old man of the hill, which means that I shall wash the dust from my face, put a few more hair-pins in my hair, and meet you when the bell rings or the gong clashes.”



## CHAPTER VIII.

### A MINUTE TOO LATE.

**S**USIE went out of the cabin into her own, which was next, and peered at herself in the glass to see how much damage the scorching American sun had done to her hitherto unblemished skin.

The sense of freedom from all troublesomely emotional feelings as regarded Eugene was delicious. She felt at such an advantage with him now : her heart swept of all sentimental recollections of him—her

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mind free from all prepossession—her perception of his character clear and unbiassed—never in her life had she felt more self-satisfied. Yet, like everything else in the world, this balmy self-complacency had a drawback. She could not help thinking how complete it would be if only Ranicar Hungerford could see it. She wished, with a deep devoutness, that a day might come when in some way he could be made aware that the bane of other days had been its own antidote,—when he might be an eye-witness to her indifference, her utter loss of interest, as to Eugene.

Ah ! where was he ?

If the wandering air, scented with water and woodland, could only have whispered a message from him to her, as she leaned out of her little window, gazing at the river sides steeped in tints of amber and rose, and the water where the fiery streaks were beginning to fade !

At this moment came the clang of a gong, accompanied by a stentorian voice, roaring,

“ Supper’s ready !”

Susie opened her cabin door, and met her step-father face to face.

He was still talking to the man who had ventured to break the ice of his insular reserve. A Texan. Tiny of hand and foot, long of hair, perfect of feature, green of eye. His eyes were lambent, but not feline. His face reminded one of that of a baby-tiger, who has not yet discovered the fierce uses of his claws and jaws, or found out that man is toothsome as the fawn.

Captain Eustace had served in the Confederate army : had leaped rifle pits with a cigar in his mouth ; dodged fragments of shell by swinging himself over his horse like a Comanche ; had fought to the bitter end of the seven years war with only a



sabre-cut arm to diminish his eager pugnacity.

He had returned to Texas to become the love-prisoner of a spoilt girl,—an orphan and heiress ; unfortunately, he had her indifference to overcome ; but, whether he overcame it or not, he succeeded in winning her. They were married in her home among the orange and magnolia trees early in the winter, and came North when the hot weather began. She was pale ; and slender and graceful as a blade of waving prairie-grass. She spoke with a languor peculiar to women of the very far south. Her words were sweetness long drawn out, and the ends of them sounded as if blown away by a breath of wind.

Susie regarded her with an eye of favour. Her motions were so slow, and sidelong, her glances so swift and direct. She heard her husband call her “Pettie,” as if “Pet” were not caressing and *diminutive* enough.

“Come, Susie,” said Sir Alfred, giving the door of his wife’s cabin a light rap, “we are going up to—what is it?”—turning to Captain Eustace—“tea?”

“Tea or supper, just however you choose to call it, sir,” answered Captain Eustace, and in his turn knocked on an opposite door, which opened to allow the egress of Mrs. Eustace in a Louis IX. hat, and black cashmere dress smothered in lace.

Lady Ogle came out at the same moment, and they all went on together, but without exchanging any words.

“And where is Eugene?” said Sir Alfred. “Where is Mr. Everard? do you know?” he added, to his servant, who was then coming down the stairs.

Eugene answered for himself, by appearing from one of the little white and gold state-room doors and joining them, giving Mrs. Eustace a stare to betoken his recognition of her charms.

He managed to secure a seat by Susie ; and his air of nursing a sentimental grievance half amused, half annoyed her.

“ Does the motion of the boat make you feel unworthy of an appetite ?” she asked him, smiling ; and without waiting for a reply turned to listen to her step-father, who was telling his wife that Captain Eustace knew a friend of his, Lord —— ; and had once been his guest for three days in Scotland. That he and Mrs. Eustace were now on their way to Chippewa, a place not far above the Falls, where they owned a house.

“ *I* want to know them, Sir Alfred,” put in Susie ; “ I admire them extremely. Is it not selfish of him, mamma, to keep them all to himself ?” leaning across Sir Alfred to speak to her mother.

“ Very. We will insist on his sharing them. You are to bring them to us after

tea, Alfred. Susie, Mr. Everard is speaking to you."

"I beg your pardon; what?" said Susie, turning back to Eugene.

"My question was so trivial that I shall not repeat it," he returned, sullenly.

"But I would far rather have a trivial question asked me than an important one," said Susie.

"Before we both live much longer, I must insist on your hearing an important question or two—on your listening to a matter grave enough to me, whatever it may be to you."

"Oh, *grave*?" said Susie, dissuasively. "You were always such a light comedy man; I cannot fancy you *heavy*—grave."

"Whatever I may have been, I am not a jocular man now. I suppose you mean that I was once a jocular man, most despicable of all animals."

"So I think. No, you were never quite

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that. Mr. Mallalue was a jocular man, and you are not in the least like him. Do you know him?"

"No; never heard of him."

"We all did find him such a bore. Mr. Hungerford and I were the only ones who had the courage not to pretend that we were amused, as the others did for civility's sake."

"Ah! Hungerford," said Eugene, as if stirred by the name, "*where is he?*" A flickering smile curving his lips.

"I do not know, in the least," answered Susie, her glance wavering away from him for an instant. "Then he has not found you yet?"

"Found me? how do you mean?" asked Eugene, quickly.

"What language shall I translate it into?" said Susie, pertly. "I cannot find plainer, simpler words in English."

"I did not say *what* do you mean; I said

*how* do you mean," returned Eugene, with rising choler. "Of course, I wish you to explain. Naturally, I am astonished to know that he was in search of me. What does he want me for?"

Susie regretted her ill-considered words. "You have not told me yet whether he has found you," she said, merely to evade answering, and blushing guiltily.

To her surprise, without replying, he pushed his chair back from the table, and went away.

"How very uneven his temper seems to have become!" said Susie to Sir Alfred. But Sir Alfred was speaking to her mother, and did not attend to her.

Eugene was not in the brilliantly lighted saloon when they entered it. The Eustaces were there; and gradually they all fell into conversation together.

There was something quite fascinating to Susie in Mrs. Eustace's soft drawl, and her

wondrous accounts of life in Texas ; of the " Northers," when, according to her own showing, she was always within an inch of perishing ; of her pair of mustangs, " so cunning ;" of the mocassin snakes, that coiled among the lovely garden-flowers, and writhed along the velvety grass of the lawn ; of the " cock-tail " she was obliged to drink every morning to give her a little energy to get up and dress.

Susie saw no more of Eugene that night. They slept on board the boat, and the next morning early arrived at Albany, where they went on shore to breakfast. They were then to take train, and proceed directly to the Falls of Niagara.

Eugene took his place beside them at the table, in the great room of the noisy railway hotel, and was blithe and *débonnair* as he had used to be in the days of old.

Amidst the shrieking and hooting of engines that clanked and snorted past the

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house, shaking it as if by earthquake; the noisy clatter of dishes appertaining to a hundred breakfasts; the striking spectacles of a man eating three boiled eggs mixed together in a green hock-glass; a little girl fishing for onions in a jar of pickles with her mother's shawl-pin; a lady breakfasting off raw tomatoes, iced milk, and frozen strawberries and cream;—they finished their morning's meal, and went out of a door that opened into the station itself.

Their train started in ten minutes.

“Before we get in,” said Susie. “I should like to go to that book-stall, and select something to read on the journey. Will you come with me, Sir Alfred?”

“I will go with you,” volunteered Eugene, promptly.

Sir Alfred seemed to feel his place filled, and turned to listen to something his servant was saying to him.

Susie started off, with Eugene following her.



As she bent over to examine the books, he turned carelessly and watched a train that was about to be shunted on to another line.

A glance of acute exultation shot into his eyes; for on the platform at the end of the last car, stood Ranicar Hungerford—his face wan with night travel — buying a newspaper of a boy who stood on the station platform, below him. Should he but lift his eyes and turn them to the right, he would see Susie and himself, he would leap off, there would be a reunion which might lead to a result that made Eugene grind his teeth even to think of.

Just at this moment a man came wheeling a loaded truck rapidly and inconsiderately along, leaving people to get out of his way as best they could.

“Pardon, Miss Dawnay,” said Eugene, hurriedly, “stand back, or this Goth will bowl us over.” He pushed her as he spoke

behind a great pile of Saratoga trunks, boxes, wine-cases, corded chests, that towered above them.

As they thus effaced themselves, Eugene heard, as sweetest music, the groaning and grinding of the wheels on their iron road, as Hungerford's train started. It was a train for Lake George.

Susie emerged from behind the mountain of luggage, and her glance crossing Eugene's, which was with intention averted from the departing train, caught Hungerford, who still stood on the platform, his side face turned towards them.

"It is he!" she said aloud, involuntarily, and made a step forwards. There was a mute profundity of disappointment in her eyes. The disappointment that an untoughened heart knows when it finds out for the first time the bitter meaning contained in those two words, *too late*.

"Too late!" she said.

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Hungerford stepped from the platform into the car. The door swung after him, and he was lost to sight. The train glided away, its big piped engine screaming as lustily as a young eagle.

“Why did I not see him a minute sooner, so that he might have seen me?” Susie murmured to herself. “Did you hide me and yourself behind that stack of luggage on purpose?” she said, turning to Eugene, and speaking with forced unconcern.

She did not wait for him to reply, but walked back to her mother and step-father in advance of him.

“I have just seen Mr. Hungerford,” she said.

“Have you?” cried Lady Ogle.  
“Where?”

“On the train that has this instant gone out of the station.”

“We had really better get in,” said

Eugene. "Our train is on the point of starting."

They complied. And, indeed, they only had time to enter and take their places when they were off.

In the car they found the Eustaces. And the long journey together ripened their acquaintance to a point that emboldened the little woman to beg for a visit from them at their house at Chippewa.

Lady Ogle graciously accepted, and Susie, too, was warm in her acquiescence.

She was a child of nature, Mrs. Eustace. She was not a foe to conventionality, but she was ignorant of many of its requirements,<sup>e</sup> and she could not refrain from a little languid coquetry with Everard. There was a spicy satisfaction in calling that unusual green fire into her husband's fine eyes. Eugene prized the situation as being a test to Susie. But he reaped no reward of pleasant proof.

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All day long they travelled. Towards eight o'clock their destination began to grow near.

"My heart beats wildly with expectation," said Susie, pressing her hand on her side.

"I hope it will not be too dark for you to see them to-night," returned Captain Eustace; "but I fear it will. And there is no moon."

"But we shall hear them," said Lady Ogle. "Hark! do I not hear them now even through the noise of the train?"

"No; impossible!" Captain Eustace told her.

It was nine o'clock before they reached the Cataract House. The Eustaces sent over their luggage, and arranged to spend the night at the hotel, crossing the river in the morning.

And now to all words, all noises, to all thoughts of good and evil, there was the

accompaniment of the ceaseless noise of the hurrying waters. Their hoarse roar chimed in with Susie's thoughts of Ranicar. Her inward wail that she had seen him just too late to attract his attention, seemed to trail off into the hollow and hungry moan of the water, and yet to be part of her own consciousness still. And when she had fallen asleep, she seemed to be trying, through distracted dreams, to overtake him—her limbs numb and disobedient. Once she awoke sobbing, after a dream-struggle with a dream Eugene, to get to her old lover, who only smiled his well-remembered smile at her, and vanished.

Waking at dawn, thoughts of him, speculations as to where he was going, callow hopes that he had come to the New World partly with the hope of seeing *her*, was food enough for her mind during the slow hours of early morning inaction—that time when facts have an idealism which

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softens their hard, sharp outlines, and circumstances seem more plastic far as we lie supinely aloof from them than when we are up and doing, and actually coping with them ; when it is much easier to calculate on agreeable effects ensuing from doubtful causes ; when the leverage of baffling combinations seems less powerful ; and when we feel ourselves best armed against the battalia of disagreeable events. Hungerford on this side of the ocean ! Susie was comforted by the thought. And there were many chances of meeting him. At any moment he might appear. What would he think of finding Eugene with them ? But that he should not harbour mistaken ideas on the subject for long, Susie was resolved.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE WATER GIANT.

**W**HEN one sees the Falls of Niagara for the first time, one feels that they have not until that moment lived up to their highest privileges. They are a revelation to the peculiar consciousness of the individual which it is impossible to impart to another. Memory clings to the sight and sound of them with a tenacity that years, and the varied impressions of a life, are powerless to weaken. They have no solemnity; almost every other adjective of grandeur and beauty are



theirs, but that one does not belong to them. They do not inspire the still adoration that the mountain does in its dumb, motionless, frozen peace. They stir and excite, for in looking on them one looks on a scene of perpetual tumult and affray. The rocks and the water struggle and tussle mightily together, and snarl and clamour; the very trees that grow on the islands near the verge are contorted and twisted by the bullying air that the water brings with it, and they crouch over like slaves till their deformed branches touch their oppressor. As the water takes its arrow-swift plunge, the imagination plunges with it. The heart quails to think of what that emerald glory meets at last, what pointed rocks, what boiling eddies, and whirling currents, and rapacious vortices.

“Stunning, ain’t they?” said Eugene.

“Aren’t they exquisite, charming, delightful?” said Mrs. Eustace, taking care

only to use the prettiest adjectives. "They are like shot satin half covered with exquisite lace. They are like—oh, I don't know what they are like, do you, Miss Dawnay?"

"Indeed I do not," answered Susie, dreamily. "Who would venture to describe them?"

"Why, *I* have just described them," said Mrs. Eustace, laughing, and giving her head a little toss.

"Have you?" said Susie; "I did not hear you. So has Mr. Everard described them," she added, smiling; "he says they are 'stunning.'"

"I hate gigantic descriptive terms," said Eugene in Mrs. Eustace's ear. "Nice serviceable little words serve one's turn much better."

"I don't know how to use anything but serviceable little words," answered Mrs. Eustace, with one of her sleepy smiles.

They were all standing on Prospect Rock together. The Eustaces had lingered to enjoy watching the first impressions of the strangers.

It was a day full of the exuberant sunshine and vitality of some North American summer days. The very air and sunshine seemed to frolic and dance. The water, leaping into the rarefied atmosphere, scattered abroad showers of jewels, and its voice was as the voice of a great multitude cheering hoarsely for its ruler and its God.

All about them the scene was gaudy and stirring.

Squaws in their motley dresses were squatting on the ground at the foot of the trees, busy at their tawdry work. Graceful women and careless men lounged hither and thither, or, taking attitudes, were photographed with the Falls for a background.

A band was playing airs from La Grande Duchesse, and over the bridge that spanned the river like the skeleton of a snake, were seen moving dots of colour and life.

A choking sensation came in Susie's throat; she felt that vague unutterable yearning for an unknown good which the fragmentary joys of our poor life stir in us when they have reached their acme.

“Good-bye, we must go now,” said Mrs. Eustace, coming with her pretty dawdling grace to slip clinging fingers round Susie's, and being obliged to exchange her soft, wheedling drawl for a shrill scream; “but we shall come over to-morrow night; there's to be a hop at the Cataract. You'll be there? even if it's just to look on. 'Tis a real pretty sight. All the Buffalo girls come over.”

“Do they? Of course, mamma, we must see the Buffalo girls hop. Why, there's a jovial sound in the very words.”

“The Joys and the Loves are going to powder their hair,” went on Mrs. Eustace simply (Americans have a way of expecting intuition on the part of strangers). Susie did not know, naturally, that Love and Joy were notable names in the town of Buffalo.

“To show they are cousins,” concluded Mrs. Eustace; “Mrs. Major just told me so. They are always thinking what they can do next, the Loves and the Joys. They love little frolics, such as driving over here four-in-hand, dancing all night, and going home at sun-up.”

“Full of energy,” said Sir Alfred patronizingly, “and activity, and, ha—vigour.”

“Just so,” acquiesced Mrs. Eustace.

“I shall go to the hop, Mrs. Eustace, if it is only to see you,” said Susie.

“And I hope you will give me the honour of dancing with you,” said the mad fighting captain, timidly.

“ Oh, certainly,” said Susie, courteously ;  
“ I shall give you a dance with pleasure.”

“ Mrs. Eustace,” spoke up Eugene, “ you  
will give me one—or two ?”

“ I am an old matron,” said Mrs. Eustace  
coquettishly, “ my dancing days are over.  
But if I find that you dance very elegantly  
I’ll give you a waltz perhaps.” And she  
held out her little frail hand to him.

Then the young pair walked away to-  
gether through the morning sunshine, and  
the Ogles went for a stroll over to Goat  
Island.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE LOVES AND THE JOYS.

**S**USIE was standing with her step-father in a room on the ground floor, near the door, which they called the reception-room. It was about nine o'clock in the evening, a warm, windless, starless night, when above the dull roar of the water they distinguished the rapid trot of horses coming up to the door, and the sound of ringing, high-pitched voices, shrill laughter, little screams, scraps of airy song; and then came the rush of light feet in clattering heels running up the

wooden steps, through the wide hall, and up the stairs, the laughter growing noisier, the voices shriller. The atmosphere seemed pervaded by the scent of violets.

“The Loves and the Joys, I smell their hair-powder,” said Susie sagaciously, and running to the door she looked out.

Half a dozen slim figures with snowy heads and airy draperies of white and rose pink, and forget-me-not blue, were going up the stairs with the floating rapidity of flying scud; four or five young men followed.

If two children's schools had been let loose in the hotel they could not have sent forth sounds of more riotous amusement. Doors on either side the long corridor were opened, and inquiring faces were thrust out.

But the habitués of the hotel merely said, “Only the Loves and the Joys *rowing*.”



“Sir Alfred, do you not think that mamma must be dressed by this time?” asked Susie. She had on somewhat of a gala gown, and was ready to go and look on at the dance.

“Ah, here you are,” said Eugene, appearing from the adjoining reading-room, and coming up behind them.

“Yes,” answered Susie, “here we are; now we are going to get mamma. You had better go at once, and be introduced to some of those pretty girls who have just come; I am sure you would enjoy dancing with them.”

“Will not *you* give me a dance or two?” demanded he. “I think you were kind enough once to say that my step suited yours, or something of the kind.”

“I don’t think it would suit me now; I have improved in my dancing,” said Susie, maliciously, and moved away, leaving Eugene in that attitude of mind best expressed

by a shrug, a drawing down of the corners of the mouth, a lifting of the eyebrows, and no desire for speech beyond a trenchant, ejaculatory word.

They found a cool corner in the bright evergreen-decorated ball-room, and extracted a great deal of amusement from the scene.

Most in evidence were the Loves and the Joys, their powdered heads and Pompadour colours making them as conspicuous as they desired.

They danced with the absorption of passion. If dancing had been their covenant for immortality, they could not have chased the rythmical waltz music with more eager, tireless feet.

Their delicate dresses became torn and soiled; the powder shook like scented dust from their disarranged hair, and streaked their flushed cheeks.

Mrs. Eustace, who made her appearance

somewhat late, in a garment of mauve gossamer and lace daisies, tried ineffectually to explain which were Joys and which Loves.

Susie would gladly have danced with Captain Eustace, but Sir Alfred so evidently objected to her being anything but a looker on, that she sat still, beating time longingly with her foot.

Eugene was to be seen flying down the room with the Mænad locks of a Joy floating over his shoulder. Presently he came panting up to Mrs. Eustace.

“She does not dance like anything made out of the dust of the earth; she dances like a—what shall I say?—a whirlwind, a vortex. Will you give me this, Mrs. Eustace?”

“But I am afraid you will say that I dance like a whirlwind or something.”

“Oh, but I liked it,” said Eugene, quickly, “and I know that I should like your dancing. Come.”

She held back for a moment, waiting for a dissuasive or acquiescent word from her husband, but he was dumb, his gem-like eyes looking past her with an irritated gleam.

Eugene led her away, and they glided off, not to return at the end of the dance, but to vanish.

“Eugene,” murmured Lady Ogle, to her husband, “is at his old diversions again.”

“What do you mean?” said Sir Alfred, stiffening his neck. “Philandering with married women? Highly reprehensible. I shall speak to him if I see anything justifying interference.”

“Pray do,” rejoined his wife. “I almost think that the expression of Captain Eustace’s face at this moment justifies a cautious word or two to your nephew. There is a very angry glitter in those fine eyes of his. You see it is not the mere fact

of Eugene's saying things, but it is the way he says them."

"Eugene has always had most ingratiating manners."

"Yes," said Lady Ogle, drily, "I know."

"I fear he may have inherited laxity of moral law, and incapability of self-guidance, from his father, who was singularly devoid of fundamental rectitude, or the self-sway that is prompted by high principle. A reckless spendthrift, 'be merry to-day, for to-morrow you die' fellow," said Sir Alfred, in one of his pyramidal sentences.

"Yes; I believe, of course, that qualities are transmitted. Now I am going to beckon to Captain Eustace, and make myself very agreeable to him, until his wife returns."

She acted on her words, and was so charming that Captain Eustace could not resist making a proposition for the following day: that he should bring his horses

over the bridge, and drive her and her daughter down to the whirlpool. He said nothing about Mrs. Eustace, who, after dancing another waltz, having another lengthy disappearance, finally returned to her husband, with a fire-fly, flickering brightness in her usually sleepy eyes.

“And you will not give me a dance?” asked Eugene of Susie.

“No,” answered she.

“Your refusals are always so spirited,” he said, not attempting to veil his mocking tone. “*Now*,” he added, after a sufficient pause to give the word significance.

The blood dyed her cheeks with an angry crimson, and she made no reply.

“Are you ready?” said Captain Eustace coldly to his wife.

“Ready for what?”

“Ready to go.”

“I shall be, after I have got my cloak; I left it in the drawing-room, you know.

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It's very early, too, it takes *you* to be in a hurry!"

"Let me go and get it," said Eugene, promptly.

"Oh, you'd have such a hunt for it. I had better go myself," starting off.

The upshot was that they went together, she and Eugene.

"Then to-morrow afternoon at three, I shall have the honour of driving you and Sir Alfred Ogle and Miss Dawnay down to the whirlpool," said Captain Eustace, as he shook hands with Lady Ogle in farewell.

She acceded, and the Eustaces went away together, yet with that air of hanging aloof which is only seen in wedded pairs who are trying not to sacrifice appearances to a conjugal disagreement.

Susie and her mother left the ball-room presently. Sir Alfred lingered to speak to an English naval officer whom he had lighted on, a casual acquaintance of former days.

Eugene tarried, to have a few more dances with the pretty American girls, who united in thinking him "Just *too* lovely."

Long after dawn had begun to streak the eastern sky, Susie heard the hurry-scurry of wheels and horses' feet; the ringing treble of women's voices, mingled with the deeper tones of men, and interspersed with prolonged, unchecked laughter, high and penetrating as the cat-bird's whistle. She jumped up, and going to her open window, cautiously turned the slats of her green blind to the proper angle, and looked down.

The Loves and the Joys were preparing to take their homeward way. A large American vehicle, with seats going across, one in front of the other, stood at the door; four gay-hearted horses pawing, snuffing the morning air, impatiently champing their snaffle bits, were harnessed to it. The Miss Joys and Miss Loves were beginning to



climb in and take their seats. Assisting one of the prettiest, with a pronounced air of devotion, was Eugene—evidently, by so doing, sending a pang, sharper than a shark's tooth, through the heart of a scowling Joy on the steps.

The light—colour of ashes of roses—fell full on the girl's face. Certainly she was fair enough to be one of the Loves of the Angels. She was bareheaded—so were most of them—and the natural tint of her golden hair shone through the diminished snow of her powder. Curling locks fell over her low forehead, and as she bent down to say a last word to the English admirer of whom she was evidently proud, the morning wind stirred them softly. She was wrapped in a light fleecy white cloak, into which her dimpled chin nestled as she held the cloak's edges close together with one bare, jewelled hand.

They all took their places. The oldest

Joy sprang on the box, and drew his wild team together. The prettiest Love kissed her hand with infantine unconventionality to Eugene. They set off with their faces towards the rising sun, singing with verve and energy, as if their hearts were leaping with the fullest life, a song of how we must

“Bid adieu to care,  
Heed not the morrow's share ;  
Greet morning merrily;”

and so were lost to sight.



## CHAPTER XI.

### ON THE ISLANDS.

“**W**HEND what have you been doing with yourself to-day, Eugene?” inquired Sir Alfred of his nephew, as they sat at dinner, soon after their return from driving with Captain Eustace.

“I have been ‘mousing round,’ as our friends here say.”

“When they want to be ambiguous,” said Lady Ogle, as if she were finishing his speech for him, and smiling as she spoke.

“I have been strolling over the river,” continued Eugene, not too well pleased at

the idea of being driven into a corner, "and along the river a short distance."

"As far as Chippewa?" asked Lady Ogle, with the same playful, rallying smile.

"Ah—yes; as far as Chippewa, Lady Ogle."

"Eugene, I beg to intimate to you, that of all unprofitable occupations, that of sowing dissension between husband and wife is the most unprofitable."

"I quite agree with you, Sir Alfred," acquiesced Eugene, in his happiest, easiest manner, 'and lifting a glass of iced champagne to his lips; "but between a Texan husband and wife, substitute the word dangerous for unprofitable."

He could not forbear a rapid side-glance at Susie; and, as it happened, instead of being serenely eating a *timbale*, as she had been only an instant ago, she was looking at him in a way that might be liable to almost any sort of interpretation. How she

loathed the confident smile with which he looked away, and continued his dinner as if something he had seen in her face added zest to his appetite! Until bedtime she determinedly avoided a tête-à-tête with him. Yet, in this her successful avoidance, there was failure, for there was a construction to be placed on it almost as obnoxious as on the boldest courting of his attention. And she was certain that he would place it—would ascribe to pique, jealousy, annoyance, what was simply a perfectly correct translation of sentiment into manner.

He was utterly spoiling the pleasure of her life. The thought that he was hatefully misunderstanding her was her last before going to sleep. And the vague cloud resting on her first moment of consciousness in the morning resolved itself into human shape, and took his name.

“Here, Susie,” said Lady Ogle, handing her daughter two envelopes as she seated

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herself at the breakfast-table. Susie found that one contained a printed invitation for her mother, step-father, and herself, to an evening party at the house of Mr. ———, whom she had heard mentioned as owning the beautiful Street's Islands, which they were anticipating seeing. This festivity was given in honour of a French celebrity of world-wide fame.

Accompanying the card was a note from Mrs. Eustace. In tiny ill-formed letters, scampering down hill across a sleek surface of salmon colour, Mrs. Eustace begged that they would see fit to go, "as in addition to the Gallic star, there would be various other heavenly bodies all more or less worth seeing." She proposed that they should drive over to Chippewa, bringing with them a maid, and their dresses for the evening. That they should visit Street's Islands (which were close by them) in the afternoon; dine with them, go to Mr.

——'s with them, and return to their house for the night.

“Would you like it, Susie?”

“Oh, yes!” exclaimed Susie, keen for amusement. “I should, really. Immensely.”

But no amount of persuasion would make Sir Alfred consent to go to an evening party. However, to spare himself the sight of Susie's frowns and pouts,—which since he had become fond of her he had grown chicken-hearted about witnessing,—it was arranged that they would all go to Street's Islands; and that Susie, only, should stay with the Eustaces for the night, going to Mr. —— under Mrs. Eustace's care. This concession was rather against the grain, but Sir Alfred preferred the arrangement to allowing his wife to go without him. *Susie* was perfectly satisfied.

Friday was the day. And Friday was the day after to-morrow. The intermediate



time was filled up with the various sights and amusements that Niagara Falls lavishly affords.

In the fear of misconception, Susie made a friendly frankness take the place of her coldness to Eugene, and he, in the fullest self-satisfaction, divided his time between her and Mrs. Eustace, never doubting but what an Anglicized, amplified version of "*prend moi tel que je suis*" would be quite specific enough, to say to Susie when the right moment came. He preferred her, certainly, to any one. He had always fancied her, and it would be the very thing for him, he told himself with the self-serving egoism that has so large a share in modern love affairs.

Every day he read the list of hotel arrivals; not only at the Cataract House, but at the other hotel, the International, thinking that he might see Hungerford's name; but it never appeared, and at this



he was—not thankful, but made a more implicit believer than ever in his own good luck.

Other men say, “Just my luck!” So did he. But with what a difference! the difference between the despondent and the jubilant. Susie, too, although she had not access to the hotel books, kept as keen a look out for a certain face and figure as a mariner off a dangerous coast at night does for the guiding beacon.

Friday dawned : as lovely a day as ever came to emphasize the difference between sunshine and cloud-gloom.

At about 4.30 they all started. Maid and ball-dress were to follow. They crossed the shivering bridge, the spray from the cataract drifting over them like smoke, and mounting a high hill on the other side of the river, between red clay banks riddled with swallows’ nests, drove smartly down the road to Chippewa.

“A beautiful land! a beautiful land!” said Sir Alfred, with calm satisfaction, and taking a connoisseur’s glance about him through his gold-rimmed eye-glasses. “I am not sure whether you are not to be envied, Eugene, in pursuing the ‘tenor of your way,’ surrounded by the wild, the grand, the beautiful, the primeval;—untrammelled by the sometimes too arbitrary dictates of society, unshackled by conventionality’s demands—upon my soul, I would not mind living in the new world myself!”

A numb, cold, deadly disappointment entered Eugene’s soul at these words, uttered in a tone of easy unconsciousness that was fatal. He was, then, quite willing to have done with him! The beautiful wife had utterly deposed him. Sir Alfred had no idea, then, of suggesting to him the relinquishment of his saw mill to his partner Van Vleck, and his return to his former life. A more engrossed affection

than that of Sir Alfred for Lady Ogle he had never seen. But he had trusted (too confidently it seemed) to the strength of old affection and kinship over the new love, the new tie. He had not calculated on the selfishness of infatuation, however, and he had not fully realized that perfect contentment asks for no addition. Sir Alfred had been very glad to see his nephew again. Nevertheless, his offence was not forgotten, nor was his re-establishment as favourite and heir desired. Sir Alfred was not at all sure that he would not have a son of his own. But in any case, Eugene's position in regard to him had altogether changed; and he was too right-minded and judicious not to see that there would be injustice in permitting his nephew to assume the old attitude of expectancy; which now, in the altered state of things, would be only a waiting for disappointment.

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The thought of his uncle, with wife and step-daughter, going back to their refined, luxurious life in England, and leaving him here alone in the back-woods, was acutely painful to Eugene. There was but the one way of securing his old position. Fortunately, the wind of preference and the tide of expediency both set in the same direction. And so it came to pass that all Eugene's hopes of a future worth the having were staked on Susie Dawnay.

He had made no reply to his uncle's words. The sense of disappointment was too choking for him to be able to find anything fitting to say, or for him to have the power of saying it with the proper coolness.

He wished now, with an inward self-imprecation, that he had not said so much about his independence, and his good luck, and his saw-mill. A little more poverty of spirit would have served his turn better, he imagined.

But he was mistaken ; it would not.

Sir Alfred, not appearing to notice his nephew's blank silence, discoursed further on the beauties of America.

Susie and her mother commented on the various people they met, driving and on foot.

At the gate of Mr. ——'s place, they found the Eustaces waiting for them. Captain Eustace hurried on to the house to send in his card, and get the key of the bridge, while the others walked slowly down through the shrubberies towards the water's edge.

The roiling rapids dividing the nearest island from the mainland were spanned by a suspension bridge, built by Mr. ——, and through the grated door, set in a species of rotunda at the end of it, was the only means of access.

Eugene, giving hardly a look or word to Mrs. Eustace, attached himself to Susie,

and tried to make himself audible through the brou-ha-ha of the rapids.

Once in the heart of the shadowy, wooded island, the water's din was deadened, and it was not necessary to speak above the ordinary voice.



## CHAPTER XII.

### LOCKED OUT.

**L**T was a scene of perfect sylvan beauty. The foliage was so dense that only here and there an arrowy gleam of sunlight was able to penetrate. The ground was covered with a yielding carpet of moss and pine needles. Chip-munks chattered at them from the boughs overhead, and long garlands of creeping-jenny wreathed grey granite rocks with airy festoons.

The islands were connected one with the other by light bridges, whose unpainted

wood showed a soft neutral tint against the vivid green of water and leaf. All about the island's edges foamed and swirled the rapids, strong enough to bear away a strong swimmer as easily as a withered leaf.

"Susie," said Eugene, as they plunged again into comparative silence, "I do not know whether I am offering you anything worthy of your acceptance when I offer you myself."

A short, pregnant pause. Susie, with her eyes cast down, is mute; she is framing some suitable response.

"But I believe," Eugene continued, "that a devoted attachment is thought worth having, even if proffered by a vaurien like myself. Will you have it?"

Susie now raised her eyes; there was a brightness in them that told of inward amusement.

"I think you might select a better term than 'devoted attachment,'" she said, pur-



posely making her tone and manner inexpressive.

“A better term!” repeated Eugene, hardly knowing whether to be puzzled or pleased. “I will tell you that I lo——”

“I will tell you,” interrupted she. “I will suggest as suitable phrases, *under the circumstances*, a faithless fidelity, an unwavering constancy to me and all my good-looking neighbours, a firm allegiance to love of variety—those are good, eh? and fitting?”

“Do not turn me into ridicule, whatever you do,” he replied, raising his voice in anger. “What do you mean by suggesting such absurdities? Are you joking?”

“No; I was not fully in jest, and I was not fully in earnest. But, seriously, there is *no meaning*—no meaning whatever—in your offering me a ‘devoted attachment.’ You have not it to offer, Mr. Everard. Pardon me for speaking frankly.”

“Your ‘frank speaking’ is sometimes a euphemism for open insult,” he returned, roused into the harsh, bald speech of rage. “Then you refuse me?”

“I certainly do—thanks.”

He drew the corners of his mouth down into an ugly sneer.

“Being refused is considered a pity-inspiring position for a man to be placed in, even where it is gently, courteously, gracefully done by a woman; but to meet with a rustic uncouthness——”

“Is that what you call my words and conduct?” said Susie, her loss of temper being perfect and complete, as the quivering of her voice, the dilation of her eyes, testified.

“What do *you* call it? Honesty, I suppose; frankness, plain speaking.”

“I do.”

“Ah—h! I thought so!” with an indescribably rasping inflection of voice.

“You thought right then. It is a pity that we should make one another so angry,” she continued, in a gentler voice. “I am sorry if what I said sounded harsher to you than it did to myself. But I really think I am to be pardoned for being sceptical as to your devotion. Oh, you know I am, Mr. Everard! Where is the use of being surprised or angry at the way I have met this—proposition of yours?”

“I will not ask you to remember a time when you——” he began, coldly.

“No, don’t,” she interrupted. “Pray do not. It would be a waste of time.”

He looked at her with eyes of malice. He was choking with angry disappointment. Perhaps he would not have thought her words conclusive if there had not been a thorough authentication of them in her face, which had neither changed colour nor shown any sign in droop of eyelid or quiver of lip of her meaning less than she said.

Then was he actually to be forced to bake as he had brewed? To drink the wine he had poured out? To lie in the bed he had made?

This taste of his old life had made him abhor the thought of his mill in its isolated dell. He loved a life of careless amusement—dearly loved it. He felt like a race-horse harnessed to the plough at this very moment. Like a prince with a pedlar's pack on his back; like an archangel wheeling a wheelbarrow; like an Israfel grinding a hurdy-gurdy.

There is nothing too strong to say as to what he thought of the forced incongruity of his position, lost to the sight of an admiring world in a maple-wood of North America. It roused in him a craving to get the better of circumstances. He felt at deadly enmity with the present conditions of his life.

With Susie he had subsided into a darkly-suggestive silence.

Susie was hurrying forward to join her mother and the rest. He followed a little behind her.

When they came up with the others, it was found that the Eustaces were about taking their way homewards to receive some expected guests. Susie was to be left at their house on the way back, and Eugene also.

“I think,” said Susie suddenly to her mother, just as the forms of the Eustaces were vanishing out of sight, “that I will run after them, and go with them now. The din of the water, or the heat, or something, is giving me a head-ache. I shall be glad to get off these islands. By-bye, mamma and Sir Alfred, till to-morrow morning. You don’t mind my going now, mamma?”

“No, certainly not. The Eustaces proposed that you should go with them now.”

Susie hastened away on their steps.

“I think,” observed Eugene, in a roar that the now adjacent water rendered necessary—for they were at the furthestmost point of the furthestmost island—“that I will go with Miss Dawnay—with Susie. I, too, have had enough of these islands. It is quite delightful to think of Mrs. Eustace’s cool drawing-room.” He strode off over the slippery mossy carpet, and was very soon out of sight, the jungle-like thicket seeming to close upon him.

He overtook Susie as she was beginning to cross one of the connecting bridges.

“How fortunate,” he exclaimed, in hearty fortissimo, “that I came upon you! You are going quite wrong.”

“*Am* I?” said Susie, drawing back her foot. “What a wilderness it is. The Eustaces have been swallowed up among the branches already. Oh, this way is it? Over *this* little bridge, not the other. Yes, I see. Stupid of me. I never had the organ of locality.”

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With the manner of an unhesitating pioneer, Eugene pushed rapidly on through the sombre forest, Susie following him, a sense of the extreme discomfort of their present relations weighing on her. But, however, many men and maidens have to continue mock friendly intercourse under precisely the same conditions, she reflected.

They traversed bewildering paths, only wide enough for Indian file, and wandered through mazy, pathless under-brush, and still they did not come in sight of the white suspension-bridge.

“The Eustaces will have reached home by this time,” cried Susie. “You do not seem to have the gift of locality any more than I have, Mr. Everard.”

“Extraordinary, upon my word!” returned Eugene, stopping short and pushing his hat back from his forehead, while he looked at his companion queerly from under his knitted brows. “We seem to have

struck the outermost edge of one of the islands." He pointed as he spoke to a glinting of water to be seen distinctly through the trees, forced his way a little further on, and stopped again. Susie came up with him, and they both stood blankly for an instant, side by side, looking *uphill* on a desolate waste of down-pouring water.

"We must just retrace our steps as fast as we can."

"Retrace our steps!" repeated Susie, dolorously. "You speak as if we had actual foot-prints to go by. But I think I remember passing that tree, with its white bark peeling off."

They turned, and made their way back again, following the same course they had come by as nearly as they could.

"The unnatural light, the strange, close feeling in the air, and the noise of the water are maddening!" cried Susie. "We *must* find that bridge——"



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“Must is a word that human beings don't get a chance of acting on often,” said Eugene.

“But we have been wandering about here ages, centuries!” said Susie, with a tremor of dismay in her voice.

“I am very sorry to have been so unfortunate as not to have struck the right direction. But patience! we must find our way at last.”

For a few minutes they went on in silence, crossed one of the little bridges, tussled a little longer with the branches. Susie once fancied she heard voices, and gave a shrill cry, but there was no response. The sun seemed to be setting, from the dim redness of the light struggling between the boughs.

“Probably,” said Eugene, with repressed amusement, “we have been going round and round like a kitten pursuing its own tail. People have been known to do such a thing in a thicket.”

“But why,” called Susie, as she hurried on after him, “did you attempt to leave what path there was? I should not have allowed you; I should have made you keep in it.”

“I did not see any particular path,” rejoined Eugene.

“Oh! if we could only meet Sir Alfred and mamma!” cried Susie.

“Courage! I see the bridge.”

Susie burst into an hysterical laugh, as she caught sight of the bridge’s white outline.

“I feel as if I had collected all the sensations of all lost children, all shipwrecked sailors, all strayed dogs, all lost travellers in the desert, and appropriated them!” she cried.

The sun *was* setting. Its red, heat-shorn beams tinged the racing water with restless stripes of rose colour; and quivered on the leaves of the trees on the opposite shore.

Running on with eager impatience in front of Eugene, she crossed the swaying bridge, and confidently pushed against the door at the end.

The door was locked, and the key gone.

She turned and looked at Eugene speechlessly for an instant. Then she shouted hoarsely to him : " Open the door ! "

He stepped past her and tried and shook it.

" Do you not see ? it is locked," he cried. " I cannot open it."

If he had acted in accordance with his temper of mind, he would have laughed long and loud. But to laugh in the presence of what he saw in his companion's face, would have seemed almost like making grimaces at a swooned person, or caricaturing a dead one.

" Do you not understand ? " he shouted ; " Captain Eustace gave up the key to Sir Alfred, and they have gone off, locking the

door after them, supposing that *we* had gone off some time before them."

"And they think I am safely with the Eustaces! What shall I do? what shall I do?" She re-crossed the bridge with shaking knees, and threw herself down on the yielding ground.

"Perhaps," said Eugene, reassuringly, "it is not too late for some one either to come on or go off."

"But," said Susie, despairingly, "you heard Captain Eustace say that Mr. —— was not going to let any one go on the islands after five o'clock, because of his party to-night."

"Yes; I do remember that now. It diminishes one's chances of release to a very slim proportion."

Susie only stared out over the water with a dazed look of misery. And there fell a long pause between them, filled in by the water's voice of angry brawling.

“If I have to stay here after dark with that noise in my ears, I shall go mad!” cried Susie, suddenly.

“I do not think it will be *quite* dark,” rejoined Eugene. “I believe there is a moon. A young, very young, moon.” He took out his pocket-book calmly, and producing from it a tiny almanac, began searching for the moon’s phase.

“April, May, June, July. Here we are; to-day is the 2nd of July, is it not? Yes; moon is in her first quarter. Oh, no! it will not be pitch dark.”

“You do not care!” screamed Susie, desperately. “You are so *cocooned* in selfishness!”

“Oh, no; I don’t care a bit,” he returned, with exasperating coolness. “It is a warm evening, and I have become accustomed to rough it. You, unfortunately, have not. I hope you will not catch cold. Shall I take off my coat and give it to you?”

“No, no!”

“Do not look so utterly terrified. What is there, pray,” with a smile, “to be frightened at? There are neither snakes, bears, nor wild Indians on these islands. Cannot you look at it in the light of an adventure? a marked episode?”

“It is maddening; destestable. Oh! why in Heaven’s name did he set the door in that pagoda? If he had not I would have climbed over. Despair would have made me able to do it.”

“It was to prevent enterprising men and boys from climbing over, that Mr. —— had the door contrived in that way,” said Eugene, smiling again.

Susie gave way to a dumb, tearless access of dismay. The sunset light faded in soft gradations of tint. The water rushed frantically past. Eugene seated himself on the prone trunk of a tree and folded his arms. Not a living creature appeared;

and the water's noise drowned every other sound.

"Night is coming on," said Susie, starting up and beginning to pace backwards and forwards like an animal in a cage. "I am almost frenzied with terror. Think of this noise *in the dark*, what it will be!"

"Do calm yourself," he said, soothingly. "Reason with yourself. Reflect. These are islands that are visited every day by travellers and pleasure-seekers. They are, in reality, exactly the same at the dead of night that they are at midday. It is a predicament for you to be placed in, I confess." (Alas! did she not know it?) "But try and make the best of it. Control yourself; do not give way to such wretchedness. I cannot bear to see you so unstrung and unnerved, though I *am* 'cocooned in selfishness!' How I wish I had brought a flask. I suppose smoking a cheroot would not be sedative. I fear it would not."

“It gets slowly darker and darker. Well, I *will* try and control myself. But I wish I was dead.”

“Why?”

“Because my whole soul recoils before the tension and agony that I must endure. We do not know when we may be released. And I shall be sinking from hunger, and stiff and soaked with the night damp; perhaps already burning with fever——”

“Good heavens! why do you have such gloomy forebodings? Your health may not suffer in the least. We will hope that it will not. Come, sit down and lean against this tree. You are not willing, I suppose, to go further in on the island, where we should be more sheltered?”

“No, no; I must stay here, where I can watch the bridge door.”

Her voice, from having to shout at such a pitch for so long a time, sounded hoarse and faint, but there was not much compas-



sion in Eugene's face as he looked at her ; on the contrary, there was an ill-concealed triumph, which kindled Susie's anger.

"This is all your fault," she broke out, passionately. "You took no pains to find the right way. I should have trusted to my own guidance, rather than to yours."

"I am weighed down with contrition. It was atrociously stupid of me. I could pommel myself with the greatest pleasure. How could I have been such a fool, such a blockhead——"

"There, there," said Susie, holding up her hand to check him, "string no more idle words together."

"I wonder what our friends will say to this escapade?" said Eugene, after a minute's silence, and speaking in a tone of calm speculation.

"*Escapade!*" echoed Susie, her voice breaking as she raised it to its highest pitch. "Escapade! What do you mean

by calling this most miserable piece of misfortune an ‘*escapade*’?”

He made no reply for a moment, then he said,

“Pardon me, I only called it what——”

Here he stopped short, evidently with no intention of finishing his sentence unless she insisted on it.

She did not insist. She, too, was perfectly silent, and so they continued for a long space of time.

At that juncture she hated him with un-Christian plenitude, with a malignity fortunately short-lived; but she said nothing; she reproached him no more.

At length, the eager desire to know how time was going made her say to him,

“Have you matches? cigar-lights? Can you not look at your watch, and tell me what time it is?”

“Certainly I can.”

He struck a cigar-light; its little crackle

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seemed to belong to other periods of existence, quite out of accordance with this present time. Its glare revealed Eugene's face with sharp accuracy, each feature standing forth in white precision against the background of Thulean dark.

Susie felt that the sleek fair beauty of his face was more inconsistent with the frame of her mind, and the cruelty of the situation, than if it had been of an awry and Satyr ugliness.

"It is half-past eight," he said, looking at his watch.

"Do you see those black clouds overhead, beginning to shut out the stars?" cried Susie, after a short silence. "Perhaps it is going to be one of the three-day, long, north-easterly storms that they have here. In that case no one will come on the islands. We shall starve to death. Mother will go mad."

"Hush! You talk wildly. Do you not

suppose that there would be a tremendous hue and cry—I will not say about *us*, but about you—and a persevering search made, unless they thought that we had eloped together, which, of course, would be a perfectly unjustifiable flight for their imagination to take ; but still——”

“My mother would know that—*the whirlpool*—would be a more agreeable alternative to me than that.”

“Do you not think that you speak more strongly than the subject merits ?”

“No.”

There was something more painful in the hoarse hollowness of her tones than if they had been tremulous with sobbing and weeping.

“The moon is rising,” were the next words to be borne away by the water’s onrush.

It was Eugene who spoke.

“Is it ?” said Susie, everything ab-

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sent from the two words but abjectness.

“She will disperse the clouds. Tomorrow will dawn a bright day ; by eleven o'clock some brave turtle-doves, in their honeymoon, some gallant party of shopboys on an ‘out,’ will come to our rescue. Keep up your courage.”

She did not answer.

“Couldn't you suggest something for me to talk to you about, that might possibly amuse or interest you, and succeed in distracting your mind from the dark, and the disagreeableness of the ‘fix’?”

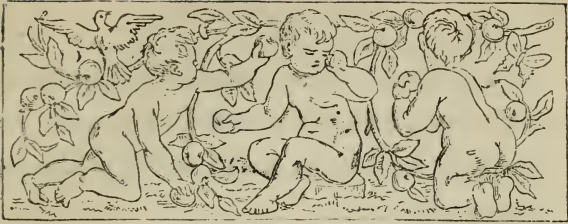
“No ; it is useless for you to strain your voice, and fatigue yourself by shouting at me for any length of time.”

“Confess, do you not think it rather praiseworthy of me never to have once alluded to the abominable way in which you have treated me to-day?”

“ I cannot now think any of your actions praiseworthy.”

“ Why, for God’s sake ?”

“ Hush !” she returned, shuddering.  
“ My voice is almost gone ; I cannot talk.”



## CHAPTER XIII.

### RELEASED.

**S**PACES of time went by. The sequence of moments which are measured only by an uneasy consciousness, a plethora of new, horrid sensations, is progression hardly more agreeable than onward moving through a sand-storm.

Now and then Eugene shouted a remark, to which Susie sometimes returned a hoarse monosyllable, oftener returned no answer at all. She sat there, gazing out into the dim, uncertain light with a moidered stare.

The moon's silvery segment came slowly up the sky, and ill-conditioned clouds did their best to rob the world and Susie of her pale sad light.

"It is not so dark as Egypt by any means, you see," said Eugene.

She did not answer; and as this was the second remark he had thrown into the unresponsive twilight, he bided silent until a great slice had been taken out of the night.

The rushing of the water seemed to change its insentient roar for a hoarse volley of menace and invective.

When the faint moon-rays shone out from between the clouds, they fell on the convulsed and writhing water in quivering gules, and on the white bridge swaying just perceptibly to and fro; they revealed the figure of Eugene thrown on the ground, his shoulders resting against a tree-trunk, and an evenly marked white oval, which was his face.

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When the sharp-horned moon was blotted out by hurrying clouds, the water became only neutral indistinctness, the bridge the faintest of pale outlines, the figure and face of Eugene, dark and white opacities of whose pose and features only guess-work could be made.

The subtle night-damps began to change the crisp freshness of Susie's gown to a sticky limpness, and, penetrating to her skin, caused her to shake like one in an ague.

"Don't you think it is better to talk than to sit here dumb, like snow images or mummies?" said Eugene.

"I cannot talk," answered Susie, in her hoarse, tired voice.

How fresh, and unfatigued, and cheery, *his* sounded!

"Are you very cold, very uncomfortable, very miserable?"

"Yes, I am all three," she replied.

“Let me take off my coat and wrap it around you.”

“No. Oh, pray look at your watch again. The night must be half over—it must be.”

He lighted another match, and looked at his watch.

“It is half-past eleven.”

Susie breathed a sobbing sigh. The light went out, and all was darkness again.

Half-past eleven. The worst, most dreary, most chilling, ghostly hours yet to come! Her heart failed and sickened within her.

But above all the bewildered misery of other thoughts rose continually a suspicion, like a pain. Had he *really* not been able to find the way back to the bridge?

She tried to chase away the question, if not entirely, at least to nooks and recesses of mind where it would lie dormant, and not vex her by its suggestion of dark and ugly malice.

And that poison-tipped word “escapade”

still rankled. It hinted at a construction on the part of people as uncharitable as it was absurd. What but pure diabolism could have prompted him to use it?

She hid her face abjectly in her hands, as for the innumerable time she presented word, motive, actual situation, to herself clearly, only to have as a result the shrewdest twinge of mental pain.

He fancied that she was weeping.

“My dear child,” he said, “I feel an awful brute. I am confoundedly miserable to have been the cause of placing you in such a dilemma. But I swear to you, that I am willing to devote my whole existence to the endeavour of making you forgive me. I will be the slave of your every whim. I will let you ride over my life roughshod. Come, you liked me once, and I am sure that I could make you happy.”

“Stop!” cried Susie, beside herself; “do not suggest anything so hateful.”

“You may perhaps find *me* a more agreeable alternative than——” he began, in a tone of hardly repressed rage.

“I shall not,” she interrupted, starting up distractedly.

At this moment might be seen, on the further end of the bridge, a spark of red light, about five feet eight inches up from the ground—the end of a cigar, presumably.

Susie in an instant caught sight of it, and an accompanying form which the sickly light permitted to be distinguished.

“There is some one crossing the bridge!” she cried, her husky, strained voice being but a poor and inefficient vehicle for the stress of joyful emotion laid on it.

She started off running to meet the slowly advancing spark—her stiffened limbs not refusing to move as quickly as if they had been of their usual suppleness.

The figure and the spark had got more than half way over when they and she met.

A hand went up, and the spark changed its position.

“I have been locked out,” cried Susie, in her new, rook’s voice. “Pray let me off the islands!”

“Certainly,” answered a strong *mâle* voice.

The moon, opening her curtain of clouds, looked down, and her light revealed the two people on the bridge each to the other. Ranicar Hungerford and Susie stood face to face on the slight structure that shivered and thrilled in the night wind like a living thing; the watery avalanche sweeping down beneath them; the moon, and whole families of stars, looking down on them from high heaven.

“You!” shouted Hungerford. “You here at midnight, and alone?”

“It is *you!*” she cried, not answering him, striking her hands together, and trying unsuccessfully to throw the wild, bound-

less delight she felt into her disabled voice.

“No ; you are not alone !” said Hungerford, putting into words for himself the visible answer to his question ; for some one was to be seen with one foot on shore, one on the step leading to the bridge.

“It is Mr. Everard. We have been locked out.”

“Ah ! It was *I* have been locked out a moment ago. And you now wish to get off the islands ?”

“Yes, yes !” said Susie, lifting up her clasped hands in frantic appeal.

“And where are you going then ? Where do you want to go ? But I suppose Mr. Everard will know.”

“I want to get back to my mother,” she cried, bursting into an agony of tears. “Oh ! take pity on me—do ! I want to get away from *him*. I have been almost crazed at being left here. They went off

and locked the door, thinking we were gone. But I cannot tell you now. Only get me off."

Here Eugene came behind her.

"You had better go to the Eustace's," he said. "It is very far for you to go over to the Cataract House. Good God! It is *you*, is it?"

"Yes; it is I."

"And how in heaven's name do you come to be taking a nocturnal ramble to Mr. ——'s islands? Have you got a skeleton key?"

"I happen to be visiting Mr. ——"

He did not condescend to any further enlightenment; but turned on his heel and recrossed the bridge, leaving the others to follow him.

As he held open the door for Susie to pass through, she said to him, concentrating all her energies into a transport of entreaty,—

“Do not leave me!”

Her voice being utterly refractory, it proved worthless as a medium for conveying the passionate supplication in her heart. She therefore clasped her hands again, with a Rachel-like expressiveness of gesture, accompanied by an interpretable look up into his eyes.

“You wish to go to the Cataract House? I fear that by this time every one has left Mr. ——’s, or there might have been people driving over to the other side who would have taken you. Let me hurry on; but you do not wish me to leave you. Very well—let *us* hurry on. Perhaps they have not all gone yet.”

“Miss Dawnay’s best plan is to go to Captain Eustace’s house, which is very near by, and where she had arranged to spend the night. They will probably just have come home, so they are sure to be up.”

“I will not,” said Susie, emphatically.



“I shall go to the hotel over the river, if I have to walk.”

“I hardly know which would be likely to be most surprised at your appearance, Lady Ogle or Mrs. Eustace,” said Eugene, the expression of an ill-disposed Robin Goodfellow crossing his face, and an outcome in the tones of his voice of whatever feeling it was that caused the look.

The sense of being actually off the islands before those terrible small hours choked Susie. She suddenly stopped stock still, with a gasping sob. Her companions looked at her by the dim moonlight in alarm.

“I am really off them!” she exclaimed. “Deliverance came. I was gladder to see you than the dog lying across his dead master’s grave would be to see that master rising up before him in the flesh,” she continued, addressing herself solely to Hungerford. Then she went on to explain how

it had come about that he had found them there.

“It was fortunate, certainly, that I happened to fancy strolling over to the islands,” he returned. “I had had enough of the heat and crowd, and I wanted to see what they were like—the islands—at night. Now, I think that since you wish to go over to the river to your mother, instead of passing the night with your friends here, the best plan will be not to trouble to find out whether there is still anybody left who would take you over—it would involve explanation, and all that sort of thing. You shall have Mr. ——’s phaeton as soon as it can be got ready, and Mr. Everard can drive you back.”

“Mr. Everard!” said Susie, blankly. “I hate him. I cannot go with him. No; you need not look at me in that way; I tell you I hate him, and I will not go with him. I had far rather go alone; and ten

thousand times rather have a servant drive me."

"But he probably wishes to get over the river, and prefers driving to going on foot."

They were walking along the path in the shrubbery now, and Eugene was somewhere behind them.

"It will do him good to walk," said Susie, with vicious energy. "Will not *you* drive me over?" she added, changing her tone to one of pleading. "I know that it is a great deal to ask, but I should feel so safe if you did, and I feel so shattered and unstrung. I could not bear any further strain."

"Very well," he assented, coolly. "I will drive you, of course, if you wish it. And what will you do while the horse is being harnessed? Go into the house and wait?"

"No, no," she said, shrinkingly; "I do

so dread *explanations*. I cannot go. Let me sit down somewhere in the grounds and wait. Make them think that the carriage is for you—will you?"

How miserable it all was! Especially miserable for honest, straightforward Susie, who all her life had been a stranger to self-screening devices, and crooked or under-hand proceedings.

He, too, seemed loth to have her take her bedraggled, hoarse, wild-looking little self into the brilliant house with its gala lights and its illustrious guest and its festive topsy-turviness.

"It is bitter," she cried, sinking down on a rustic seat that glimmered white in the shade, "that I should have to beg you to shield me from the results of Mr. Everard's stupidity, or——"

"Or what?" struck in Eugene, coming up, and planting himself before her. "Continue; or what?"

She was silent.

“ You got tired of it as soon as I did,” he continued, with a disagreeable laugh. “ We will not again lose ourselves in sylvan solitudes, pour passer le temps, will we ?”

“ *Will we?*” repeated Susie, with angry emphasis. “ No, we will not. Do you hear him, Mr. Hungerford ? Is this the version he will give of it ?”

“ We are not far from the stables,” said Hungerford. “ If you will wait here, I will go on. Come—” throwing the word to Eugene as he would throw it to an unsatisfactory pointer. “ Miss Dawnay will be better alone. Come on.”

“ With all my heart,” answered Eugene, with kindling animosity, and not moving an inch ; “ but not for you.”

“ I don't care a rap whether you come *for me* or not, so long as you come.”

Eugene neither answered nor moved.

“ Go !” said Susie, stamping her foot.

To move of his own free will was now rendered not optional, but imperative, for with a fine muscular grasp Hungerford caught him by the collar, and, thanks to the athletic suddenness of the movement, seemed on the verge of hauling him off like a sack of coals or potatoes.

But Eugene, who was strong as a sinuous sapling is strong, managed to writhe back into something approaching the perpendicular, and struggled violently to free himself.

“Stop!” cried Susie. “Do not! I shall faint unless you stop!”

Hungerford relinquished his hold of Eugene, saying, “It is a point of honour now for you to come with me,” and walked rapidly away, Eugene following him.

Susie was left alone, feeling as if the guidance of her affairs had been taken from all not unamiably disposed powers, and relegated to an Afrite.

“A display of pugnacity before Miss Dawnay is scarcely fair to her,” said Hungerford to Eugene as they moved away. “She seems completely unnerved.”

Eugene was speechless with fury; his only reply was to aim a blow at his companion's face, but the clenched hand was struck down by Hungerford before it had effected its purpose.

“I really have not time now to waste in fisticuffs. I am anxious to get Miss Dawnay safely home; and there is an archaic simplicity about fisticuffs which I object to at any time. Do you intend accompanying me while I wake some of the stablemen, or do you prefer going on your way?”

“You either apologize to me,” said Eugene, foaming with rage, “or this is not the end of it between us.”

“Perhaps not, but at present we must submit to a suspension of hostilities. Aha! I thought there might be some one about,

thanks to the festivity. Look here, will you get the phaeton ready, and be quick about it?" This last to a man who appeared from somewhere; perhaps from the path leading to the house, in whose kitchen or scullery he had been given a festal taste or sip.

The stableman was as effective a patcher up of peace as a bishop would have been. If he should fall on Hungerford, Eugene reflected, this hand-man of horses would probably go off at full speed raising the cry of "Murder!"

Without another word he walked away. Away through fragrant alleys of roses and sweet smelling shrubs, past the open lighted windows of the house, out at the gate on to the high road.

Hungerford returned to Susie.

"Is he gone?" she cried eagerly.

"I suppose he is. In a few minutes the phaeton will be ready, and meanwhile tell me again how this happened."



She told him. "And oh, Mr. Hungerford," she concluded, "how can I ever make you understand what the joy and relief was that I felt when I saw the red spark of your cigar coming over the bridge. I was not a bit surprised when I met you. I knew you were in America. At Albany, in the railway station, I saw you on the platform of a car. So did he—" she paused for a moment. "I was effaced behind a pile of luggage; he had drawn me behind it to get out of the way of—" laughing hoarsely as a raven—"to get out of the way of a man with a truck." She was too unstrung yet for a pure and simple laugh; she was obliged to catch her breath to prevent its turning into a sob. "And you are here? Staying with Mr. ——? How long have you been here?"

"I only came yesterday morning. Mr. —— is an old acquaintance of mine. I met him one winter in Florence, and the

other day he turned up at Lake George, where I was, and brought me here with him. I suppose if you had not met with this adventure, or misadventure, you would have appeared at the reception to-night?"

"Oh yes, I was going with Mrs. Eustace. Did you see Mrs. Eustace there?"

"Yes; she was pointed out to me. A tall pale lady, in her teens apparently, excessively good looking."

"Did you think her so? So do we, mamma and I, and Sir Alfred."

There was a short pause. Hungerford did not feel as if he had much small talk at command.

Susie broke silence first, saying,

"I was frightened to see you seize Mr. Everard. I suffered horribly when you went away together. I did not know what might happen. Tell me, what did he do?"

"He did nothing unusual under the cir-

cumstances. He, of course, took the only means of retaliation that one unarmed man can take against another. We were almost directly in the stable-yard, in the presence of an observant groom, and that was the end of it. When I turned round from telling the man to get the phaeton ready he was gone."

"He is at the same hotel with us," said Susie; "he joined Sir Alfred in the most *untoward* way, one day in the train, and attached himself like a fully forgiven prodigal son. But mamma thinks he will not be with us long, and I think so myself from the way Sir Alfred spoke—was it only *to-day*?—it seems a week ago, at least."

"I think we may go now," said Hungerford. "You seem stiff. Will you have my arm?"

She took it thankfully, and they went out to where the phaeton had that moment come to meet them.

“You need not come,” said Hungerford to the man. And helping Susie in, he got in himself and drove off.

There was still the same capricious light, now silvern now leaden. And the booming noise of the cataract made itself audible almost directly they struck the road.

Susie sank back exhausted by a plurality of emotions.

“I am not going to make you talk,” said Hungerford kindly. “Your voice is almost gone, and you are quite worn out, I know. I shall probably see you again before I leave.”

“*Probably!*” The word drove through her heart like a knife.

“I hope I shall see you again,” she returned, hardly above a whisper. “And my mother, I know, would so like to see you to thank you.”

“Lady Ogle’s thanks would be sweet to hear, I am sure, and even though they are

quite undeserved I should be sorry never to hear them."

"Some people say that there is really no such word as *never*," faltered Susie, not quite knowing what she was talking about in her aching disappointment and wounded vanity.

"No such word as never! What wise-aces say that? *Never* is a truer word than *now*. *Now* is not, as we say it; but *never* is a word whose truth does not diminish in the speaking."

"Perhaps I have not got it right," rejoined Susie, wearily. "I daresay I have not. My head feels in a whirl."

"Then you shall not tire it by talking." And they drove on in silence, according to this suggestion.

Down between the red banks—red no longer, in the moonlight, but listed with pale stripes and dark; the dark stripes being shadows of the railway-bridge sup-

ports ; the pale, the spaces between them where the light filtered through. Then along the road, close beside the precipitous, unprotected verge, and so across the river and up to the hotel-door.

Although it was just upon one o'clock, all was bright and wide awake at the big "hostelry."

"What an ordeal!" murmured Susie ; "to have to go through the hall and up the stairs ! And are you going back again now ?"

"Yes ; straight back. And, by the way, I believe I heard Mr. —— organizing an expedition for to-morrow, or rather to day, which I suppose I am included in, and which will bring me over to this side, so that I shall see you again. Stop !—Don't thank me. There is nothing to thank me for. If you choose, I will get some one to hold the horse, and see you through the hall, and up the stairs——"

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“Oh, I do choose!” said Susie, eagerly. “Anything is better than having to go alone.”

He sprang out, and laying hold of a sleepy mulatto boy, sent him to the horse’s head, and half-lifting Susie out—for she was as stiff as a rusty hinge—drew her arm through his, and led her through the hall.

It being the land where the actions of young women are not subjected to close criticism, no one appeared even to look at the pair. Hungerford saw his charge safely to the top of the stairs, and there leaving her, ran down again, entered the phaeton, and drove briskly away.



## CHAPTER XIV.

WITH THE FALLS FOR A BACKGROUND.

**S**USIE, not daring to wake her mother, stole quietly into her own room, and slept away seven restoring, recruiting hours ; and at eight o'clock aroused to a host of recollections, none of them pleasant, and an agreeable knowledge that she was not chained to her couch by rheumatism, or rendered voiceless altogether ; for she immediately tried her vocal powers by saying her prayers aloud.

And she should see him again to-day, "probably." His words had a way of



lingering in her memory and springing up as answers to her own mental questions.

She lay there pondering what gown she should put on; reposing an undue confidence in the efficacy of *toilette*, as women too often do.

Her big eyes looked disapprovingly at her pale face.

“God made an ugly woman, making me,” paraphrased she, discontentedly, moving away from the glass. “He does not care for me any more! Has long ceased to care for me, most likely; and despises Eugene, now, too thoroughly to wish to foil him. He probably thinks we are just suited to each other!”

With this bitter piece of self-depreciation, she made her way to their sitting-room, where Sir Alfred and her mother were already at breakfast.

“You!” exclaimed Lady Ogle, showing how pretty the emotion of surprise can be

made when demonstrated by an arching of even brows, a quick parting of curved lips, a graceful upraising of slight white hands. Sir Alfred, on his part, made it evident that surprise is susceptible of a translation into play of feature to be avoided.

“Why, when did you come back?” continued Lady Ogle.

“I came back at one o’clock last night,” answered her daughter, and thereupon entered into explanatory details.

“Very wanting in the gift of locality—really—Eugene. Very stupid of him, upon my word.”

“Very stupid of him, or else——” She stopped short; she had been on the point of saying, “very malicious,” but she substituted “very stupid of me. But he told me so peremptorily that I was going wrong—he seemed so sure—that of course I followed him. Well, it was only a few hours of misery. But only imagine, if it

had not been for Mr. Hungerford, I should have been sitting there—an aching, frightened, exhausted creature.—at this moment. I did not know what capacities for strong feeling I had, until I saw him coming over the bridge.”

“And what brings him to this side of the Atlantic, eh, Susie?” asked Sir Alfred, infusing something intended to be light and effervescent into his manner.

“I do not know,” answered Susie, a flush overspreading her face. “He is always on the wing.”

“And we shall see him to-day or to-morrow, of course?” said Lady Ogle.

“Not, of course, by any means,” rejoined Susie, haltingly, and thrusting out her lips. “He was very vague about it. He is only to be with Mr. —— to-day and to-morrow, and he did not vouchsafe to inform me what was going to become of him then!”

“And what became of Eugene last night?” inquired Sir Alfred.

“I don’t know,” said Susie, in palpable confusion. “I—I suppose he walked back to the hotel. Has he not appeared this morning?”

“No, he has not.”

The morning wore on, and he still did not come. Towards twelve o’clock Susie and her mother strolled out into the gaiety of sunshine and crowd, and bent their steps to Prospect Rock, where the band was playing, and where everything was brightest.

An animated knot of people being photographed in a group struck their attention, and they immediately discovered that they had fallen upon the Eustaces, Eugene, and three strangers: friends of the Eustaces, probably.

Eugene was posed next to Mrs. Eustace, and if ever there was a representation of his wife that a man would like to fling into the fire, this was one.

The instant they were free to move, Mrs. Eustace came running up to Lady Ogle and her daughter.

“You spent last evening more romantically by a long shot than *we* did!” she cried, to Susie.

“I *was* astonished, when Mr. Everard told me! Got locked out! I thought you had changed your mind about coming to me. I have found English people pretty capricious before this.”

“Oh, Mrs. Eustace,” said Susie, eagerly, “surely you did not think I should be so rude? It was the most disagreeable experience of my whole life, last night. Romantic! If that is romance, let me never be anything but prosaic.”

Mrs. Eustace laughed, nodded, and turned away. The sight of the photograph, in which she herself figured, was far more interesting than listening to another woman's explanation of an episode which

involved the most charming man who had ever crossed Mrs. Eustace's life-path.

The negative was exhibited against a back ground of coat sleeve. It proved a dead failure, each person having a ghostly penumbra.

"Miss Dawnay, will you not be photographed with us?" asked Captain Eustace. "It will be of much more value to me, I assure you, if you are included in it."

Poor Captain Eustace! For Nature to have given him green eyes, seemed significant.

Susie, hesitating, looked at her mother.

"Yes, go," said Lady Ogle.

Susie accordingly added herself to the group, that she might not appear ungracious.

Somehow, she hardly knew whether by accident or design, Eugene was between her and Mrs. Eustace.

They posed themselves in attitudes of grace; they remembered what their mirrors had told them was their most becoming

expression, and with it they endowed their countenances ; they forebore to wink, they forbade a muscle to move, they allowed the sun to stare them in the face and blind them, with an heroic immobility. What was the result ? Six negroes of a bitter ugliness, and an unmitigated awkwardness, were presented to their gaze, standing against an indescribable background, which might be smoke or might be flame, or might be snow, or *might* be water.

“Excellent of us,” said Captain Eustace grimly. “Capital ! Could not be better !”

Mrs. Eustace flushed. “Pray let us try again,” she said, earnestly, turning away with a frown from the fast fading proof.

“Certainly those representations of self are not food for vanity,” remarked Eugene, watching her with a smile.

“I have no vanity—not a bit,” answered Mrs. Eustace, quickly ; “but do let us try again.”

The photographer, however, seeing an impatient couple, whose month of honey had too evidently been abbreviated by perhaps forty-eight hours, assured them with a hurried solemnity that it was one of the best photographs he had ever taken, and that if they were to pose again twenty times, a better result could not be obtained.

So they ordered half-a-dozen of their blackamoor group to be struck off, with Eugene turning a little away from Mrs. Eustace, apparently to fix an avid gaze on Susie Dawnay's profile.

The spoilt girl-wife, who could not bear opposition or thwarting, was piqued into a palpable effort to chain Eugene to her side, and she succeeded. They went dawdling away together among the trees, making a very pretty picture—he in his grey summer suit, she in a gown of exquisite colour, texture, and confection.

Some people just arrived upon the scene,



and not knowing that any one was near belonging to them, looked after them with a smile ; and one said to the other—

“ There are always such a heap of lovers and couples just hitched together here !”

Susie never forgot the expression of Captain Eustace’s face as he caught these words. She was standing beside him at the time, and his passions were too fierce and uncontrolled not to be visible in his face. He recovered himself in an instant. His features took on their usual expression.

“ Are you going to Mr. ——’s picnic to-morrow ?” he asked, in a would-be careless tone.

“ No,” answered Susie, her heart leaping with hope, “ I am not asked ; if I am asked I shall go.”

“ Oh, you may reckon on being asked.”

“ We have a friend staying with Mr. —— ; Mr. Hungerford. Perhaps you saw him last night ?”

“ I shouldn't wonder if I did. Tall, elegant-looking fellow—rather over-civilized—rather up on stilts—rather unget-at-able—with a sort of ‘*and-still-the-world-doth drag-me-at-its-wheel*’ expression.”

“ Yes,” answered Susie, with a slight smile; “ I think that may describe him.”

Lady Ogle had seated herself on a bench under one of the trees, and was reading. The two friends of the Eustaces (a girl and her affianced, apparently) were aloof, and absorbed in one another. Eugene and Mrs. Eustace had entirely disappeared.

Susie's glance involuntarily roved amongst the changing groups of people in search of one face, which it never lit on. Captain Eustace bit and gnawed his moustache, and his green eyes travelled restlessly from point to point.

“ How long does Mr. Everard intend staying here, do you know?” asked he, suddenly.

“I do not know, at all,” answered Susie, shrugging her shoulders; “we none of us know.” She managed to yoke to the words the tone of “and we none of us care.”

“He gave us a deliberately quaint account of your incarceration on the islands——”

“How do you mean, ‘deliberately quaint?’” interrupted Susie, frowning and flushing.

“It was romantic, amusing, picturesque, I should say, rather.”

“I wish he would bestow his rhetoric on some other subject,” said Susie, irefully. “To have given a romantic, amusing account of those miserable hours—he shouting pointless remarks to me once in a half-hour; I sometimes answering with a voice hoarse as any crow’s, sometimes not answering at all; and when I spoke at any length only to reproach him for his careless stupidity. If, I say, he extracted romance and amusement out of *that*, he must have sacrificed truth wofully to picturesqueness!”

“Phew!” rejoined Captain Eustace, “that is a scorcher! If he had been a minute quicker, he would have had his eyelashes singed off.”

The end of his sentence was relevant to Eugene’s appearing with Mrs. Eustace, carrying that lady’s lace-covered parasol.

“Rosalie!” called out Captain Eustace, sharply, and advancing a step or two; “come, we must be going.”

“Must we? Where are Abby and Leander?”

Abby and Leander at this moment presented themselves, as to a roll-call.

They all said good-morning to the mother and daughter, expressed their hope of meeting on the morrow, and went away, Eugene never leaving Mrs. Eustace’s side.

“There will be trouble there,” said Lady Ogle, looking after them.

“He enjoys seeing the effects of a violated faith, an awakened distrust, a canker-

ing jealousy, a broken hope," rejoined Susie.

"He avoided speaking to me this morning," said her mother; "looking away from me with something of a hang-dog air."

They stayed a short time longer under the trees by the water's side, and then walked slowly through the hot sunshine, back to the hotel. On the table they found a note; Mr. ——'s card; also Mr. Hungerford's. Susie could have cried with vexation.

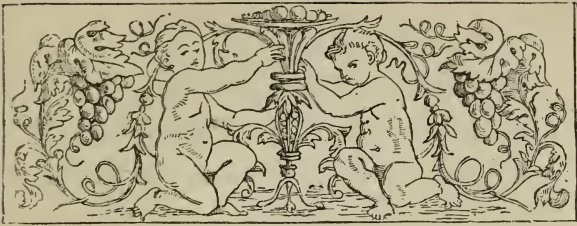
Taking the card in her hand, she sank down on a chair, looking at the little white oblong as if it had been an exquisite work of art, and not troubling herself to find out what the envelope contained.

Lady Ogle, opening it, saw that it was an invitation to a picnic for the next day, and tossed it to her daughter.

Susie, after glancing at it, went out of the room to her own, and in a moment was

cutting the name Ranicar—omitting Mr. and Hungerford—out of the card.

Be not surprised that she imprisoned the name in a locket, and that the locket was hung around her neck. She had no photograph of the name's owner ; she had never asked for one, and he, of course, had never volunteered it.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE PIC-NIC.

**U**P the river, where the water was broad and glassy, ere yet it had begun to glide glibly over its slanting bed, was a dell of aromatic coolness and shadow. The pine-trees never allowed silence to be lord, except on days of breathless heat, or while a storm was brewing. Their odorous sighs, their soft susurrus, made a melancholy minor for the fluty wood-notes of the busy, noisy birds—the cat-bird, the woodpecker, and the bob-o'-link.

The tender twilight of this aboriginal solitude was invaded to-day by twenty or thirty people, most of them children of the youngest of the nations.

French finery crushed the life from out of the fragile windflower, rearing its delicate head at the foot of a patriarch pine ; sharp little heels and pointed toes indented the springy velvet of moss-beds, and extracted sweet pungency from bruised checker-berry leaves. The fingers of five-button gloves pried into the mystery of a pine cone that had just fallen from its high estate on a topmost branch ; gay voices civilized the sigh-sown stillness, slang words and Americanisms not seeming to harmonize very well with the low, sylvan speech of the pines.

Here were Mr. —— and Ranicar Hungerford, Captain Eustace, Mrs. Eustace and Eugene,—looking at one another as they talked as if they were analyzing each



other's souls,—Susie Dawnay and Sir Alfred—actually Sir Alfred—who had been wheedled and bullied by his domineering step-daughter into bringing her, and who seemed as much out of place at a picnic in the forests of America, as a pair of snowshoes in an African desert.

There were a few of the Loves and Joys, and apart—always apart from the rest—Abby and Leander, acting as if, with the exception of themselves, the whole race of Adam was extinct. Abby was en grande toilette; the fringe of her flounces had already begun to collect all sorts of rustic curiosities; her pale gloves were stained with the leaves and flowers she had gathered, and she had left some of the frosted lace of her airy hat on a forked twig, which had helped itself to her French millinery as she passed under it.

“What an excellent photograph you had taken yesterday,” said Ranicar, falling

back, and for the first time that day entering into conversation with Susie. "The pose of yourself and Mr. Everard almost equals in grace that of Millais's Huguenot lovers!"

"Where did you see it?" asked Susie, with irritated abruptness.

"I saw it last night at Mrs. Eustace's house."

"They asked me to be taken with them. I was standing idly by with mamma, and it seemed ungracious to refuse. Mr. Everard took up that position at his own instance. It was to tease Mrs. Eustace, I suppose."

"Ah!" responded Hungerford, as if a new light was thrown, to the abolishment of shadows. "I was sorry not to find you yesterday, when I called with Mr. ——. If I had known how close at hand you were, I could easily have joined you. I really wished to know how you were, after

the exposure and anxiety of the night before ; but your being out assured me that you were none the worse for it."

"Not a bit. I slept all the bad effects away. Have you seen Mr. Everard to speak to before this morning?"

"I saw him last night, at Mrs. Eustace's."

"And what is his frame of mind towards you?" asked Susie, eagerly.

"I really cannot tell you. Last night he looked horse-whips and American revolvers at me. But the most malignant of glances hardly constitutes a critical moment, you know."

"I am afraid he is boiling over with revengefulness. Do you remember, you dragged him along a few steps as if he had been a sack of flour?"

"Oh, yes ; I remember. Now-a-days a man's means of revenge are forced into few and narrow channels. The hottest rages

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are often cooled in moulds of conventionality. Duelling is almost obsolete. The law is a specific; but then it is expensive, and has an inconvenient way of showing up a man's emotions to the vulgar crowd. It seems as if the only thing to do with the primitive passions was to subject them to a Gothic invasion of good manners and philosophical ideas. To cut a man; flirt with his wife; contest his seat in parliament; or, if you are able, give him your black ball at a club; make the nastiest facts you can collect about him public in print, under the thinnest possible veil of fiction—these are almost the only modes of revenge that the nineteenth century has left us.”

“Yes,” said Susie, “I suppose you are right.”

“Now and then,” continued Hungerford, kicking the shreddy carpet under foot into a dry, sneeze-provoking dust, “a man starts up with his mind in savage dress, and

shoots his enemy with a new-fangled rifle or revolver. He is not even able to carry out his primitive notion with an appropriate weapon."

Susie, feeling that any reply of hers might be so wide of the mark as to be a mere digression, was silent.

"There is a psychical romance," he said, glancing from Captain Eustace's features to the faces of Eugene and Mrs. Eustace, with their look of being immersed in each other's conversation.

"There is a psychical romance," said Susie, nodding towards Abby and Leander.

"Hardly," answered Hungerford, withdrawing his eyes from Eugene; "there are too few emotions involved for it to be that. Who are they?"

"Abby and Leander," replied Susie gravely. "I have not yet heard them called anything else."

"After all, is it not better to be remem-

bered by something besides one's name? I shall remember them by the Acadian frankness with which they are making love to each other."

"And I shall remember her by that perfectly lovely dress she has on, and him, because he stepped on it and tore it; a grievous rent. It made my heart ache to see it done."

"I am afraid that anything less piteous than lacerated gossamer would fail to make it ache. For example, you have not much compassion for the sufferings of self-love, often caused by your own blunt speech. Did you really mean all that you said to me on that last day we spoke together? Somehow, I have almost made myself believe that you had been over-praised for your honesty into being, on occasions, over-honest. Was it so? Did you say just a little more than you meant? It could scarcely have been the other way,

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that you meant a little more than you said!"

He laughed slightly.

Susie hung her head. Her looks alone made her fit to compete with any champion of truth.

"I should like to wring an acknowledgment from you," he said, observing her closely. "I am going to be bold enough to say *another* acknowledgment," he added, after waiting in vain for her to speak. "Because, really anyone who is able to read faces at all, would find in yours a confession of something very satisfying to the hunger of heart I feel—have long felt——"

"Now, Hungerford, if you would be kind enough to collect a few sticks, make a fire, and hang the kettle."

"Oh, I will collect the sticks," said Susie readily, feeling as cross as any number of them, at Mr. ——'s unconscious but most inopportune interruption.

“Susie,” said Sir Alfred, walking up dignifiedly, leaning on a tightly-rolled umbrella, “I observe a symptomatic levity in the actions and words of these young people. If this *al fresco* entertainment degenerates into a romp, I beg that you will not participate in it. No racing about and playing rude childish games while you are under my care, do you hear?”

“Oh, Sir Alfred,” said Susie, raising herself with her arms full of dry sticks. “I will try not. But if they play at ‘I spy’ I *hope* I shall be able to resist. What would you do to me if I could not?” she continued, laughing.

She had learnt to fit into Sir Alfred’s ways and life so completely, that she had not to keep very zealous guard over her tongue. Her actions were usually a propitiation for her words.

“I should be exceedingly annoyed,” returned the baronet in a tone of unalarming displeasure.



Susie went on picking up her sticks. Sir Alfred walked back to Mr. —, by whom he was treated with a gratifying consideration.

Two or three other damsels had found the building of a fire an interesting process, and Susie discovered that her sticks were an embarrassment of plenty.

She could not help admiring Hungerford for the deftness and quickness with which he fastened three tall sticks together, lighted a fire underneath them, and hung the kettle to boil.

They only had one old black servant to help them, the *sauce piquante* of the thing being to wait upon themselves. The old black man wore a perpetual grin, of which he was apparently unconscious. His wool was drawn tightly down over the sides of his head, and seemed to be carefully fastened at the back of his neck. This arrangement was significative, for a Joy, shielding her

coral lips with long primrose coloured fingers, whispered to Susie,

“No ears! chopped off!” dashed a glance at the old man, and went on laying stones on the corners of the table cloth.

Everyone was busy. Abby and Leander had exchanged their pastoral pastime of love-making for the advanced occupation of brewing sherry cobbler. Eugene had desisted from his highly civilized amusement of flirting with his neighbour's wife, and was idyllically engaged with a corkscrew and a bottle—the bottle containing milk in a transition state.

The prettiest Love was down on her hands and knees blowing the fire, her frou-frou dress making a sort of chevaux de frise around her.

Mrs. Eustace was slowly pouring an avalanche of biscuits out of a large paper bag into a dish.

“I can't make the milk come out of the

bottle," said Eugene, appealing to his neighbour, Abby.

"It has churned itself," answered Abby, stopping squeezing a lemon to laugh. "You must water it."

"Water it? They will fine me."

"I'll 'go divides,' as the children say, in whatever you have to pay," said Abby, gaily.

Abby floated with the stream of feminine opinion, and thought Eugene "too perfectly lovely!"

"No! it is coming; how very obliging of it."

"Abby," said Leander, sternly, "do you wish to have everybody tight? You are not looking at what you are doing. You are doctoring the cobbler with brandy till it won't be fit to drink."

"I am not," retorted Abby, crabbedly. "Don't you bother. I know how to make a cobbler a heap better than you do. No

one will think it worth a cent unless it's strong, will they, Mr. Everard?"

"Of course not," assented Eugene, promptly, and with his sweet, faithless smile.

Leander glared at Eugene as a savage creature in a detected, worthless ambush, might glare at the successful hunter.

"Very well, make it your own way," he cried angrily to the back of Abby's head, which at that moment she was presenting to him, and then he strode away, leaving Abby superintending the cracking of ice, which Eugene—having disposed of the milk—was making himself useful in.

The feast being ready at last, they all seated themselves in easy attitudes around the great, well-covered cloth.

Leander—gloomy-visaged as a shepherd who had broken his pipe, mislaid his crook, suffered his flock to stray away and be the prey of marauding wolves—watched his

shepherdess sitting by a gurgling stream, sticking flowers into another Corydon's hat—sat opposite Abby and the Englishman, and with dour looks refused to eat, and accepted to drink—to drink of Abby's 'doctored cobbler.' ”

Certainly its potency was proved, as is the worth of the proverbial pudding.

“Ugh!” said Mrs. Eustace, drawing up her little Greek nose until its classic outline was lost in wrinkles. “I feel as if there was a torch-light procession going down my throat! Who made the horrid stuff?”

“I made it,” said Abby, tossing her head, “or, rather, Mr. Everard and I made it together.”

“Why do you drink it, Rosalie, if it is so dreadful?”

“I am not going to drink any more of it,” said Mrs. Eustace, coldly.

“Have some champagne, Mrs. Eustace,” said Hungerford, “and you, too,” turning

to Susie, who was beside him. "Do not drink that compound, it is very strong, it will give you a headache."

"Is it not droll," murmured Susie back to him, "how afraid all these men are of Mr. Everard? Your poor Acadian is fast merging his simple story into a psychical romance. Look at him."

But by the time that Hungerford had withdrawn his eyes from his companion's face, and thought it worth while to look at him, Leander's jealousy had dwindled as the leg of a fly dwindles when removed from beneath a microscope and submitted to the naked eye.

Abby's sherry-cobbler made Abby a beautiful object in a rose-coloured world, to him.

Eugene had sunk into the insignificance of a confounded, conceited Englishman. Leander appeared to himself quite the jolliest, most amusing fellow that ever was

born. He was surprised to discover what a fund of anecdotes he had ; they crowded with such alacrity to his lips to be recounted, that he found himself telling two together, giving the head of one and the tail of another to his listeners, who were the best of listeners, delighted listeners, going off into such immoderate peals of laughter, that the shadowy grove rang with echoes.

Gradually they dispersed. Old John-Joe, who was as versatile as he was valuable, it seemed, had brought his fiddle, and they were going to dance in a clearer space nearer the river.

Susie, who had quite entered into the spirit of it, asked for nothing better than to fly, light-footed, over the sleek, slippery floor, Ranicar Hungerford as her partner. No ; for nothing better, nothing completer, nothing more beautiful, than to dance there in the sombre forest, with lanes of quivering

blue haze slanting through the feathery branches ; with tongues of sunshine softly licking a grey boll here and there ; with the sheeny river flowing on beside them, to be a wonder of the world a mile or two further down ; with the untutored, yet masterly, precision of time ; that the old negro, with a negro's emotional love of music, managed to make his wild, weird tune susceptible of.

She was steeped in a sense of novelty and strangeness, and delicious wonder, at being dancing by broad day-light out in the lovable July weather, in a forest, with a lover !

But they had hardly taken half a dozen turns together, when a piercing scream rang from somewhere near them in the wood.

John-Joe paused with suspended bow ; all the dancers' circling feet were still. Every one hurried in the direction of the cry. Susie running away with the rest.

They presently came upon a striking



picture. Abby, sunk limp and fainting on the ground, and dangling loop-wise over her little rose-wreathed hat, a dead snake—a harmless dead adder, but a *snake*—and kneeling beside her, with a frantic face, Leander, a long stick in his hand, a torrent of distracted words bubbling over at his lips.

“It was for fun! I had killed it! In the name of gracious why didn’t I aim straighter! I never meant it to go near her precious head! I meant to pretend to throw it at her. I meant it to go clear over her head. I felt in such high spirits; ’twas only to plague her. The minute the —— thing lit on her bonnet she fainted right off. Water! Brandy! A smelling-bottle?”

“It is very easy to know why he did not aim straight,” muttered Eugene to Mrs. Eustace, whose arm was resting on his, “and why he felt in such extraordinarily high spirits as to want to throw a snake at her. Come, we are no good here, let us go.”

More than one girl had screamed and threatened to faint at sight of the harmless miniature of the first woman's first foe. It was hustled away speedily, and several women, hurrying forward, tried to restore the ill-treated Abby to animation.

But notwithstanding all they could do, she lay there pale and still, with no sign of returning consciousness.

A frightened hush fell on the gay party.

"Some one must go for a doctor," said Leander, in a low changed voice, and obviously divided between his desire to fly for help, and his unwillingness to leave the motionless figure on the ground.

The four horses that had conveyed them were put up about a quarter of a mile off, in the barn belonging to a farm house.

"I will ride one of the horses to Drummondville, bare-backed," volunteered Captain Eustace.

"He is perhaps the lightest amongst us,"

said one of the Joys, measuring the captain's inches with his eye. "And he is about sure to be the best rider."

In a moment the Texan's light figure was seen vanishing between the branches.

But across his path was a man-trap. His own wife. And looking into the great almond eyes that seemed to be *challenging* him to meet their glance unmoved — as they had once, *once*, Great Heaven! challenged his own,—was Everard, the handsome Englishman, whom others beside himself had wished dead, had wished unborn.

"Rosalie!" (alas! "Pettie," never again) hissed Eustace between his teeth. "Abby your friend, Abby your guest, and you not with her? Shame on you!"

He passed swiftly on, but his words, uttered in that tone of blistering scorn, seemed to linger like a breath of hot wind.

"I must go," said Mrs. Eustace, hurriedly; "I must indeed: I am frightened! You,

cold Englishman! are only to us Southerners what the mountain is to the volcano."

"Do not call me 'cold Englishman,'" murmured Eugene. "And do not go back to that mob of people who are like a whole decapitated poultry-yard. Anybody would think that the sky had fallen, instead of a girl having fainted because a snake lodged on her bonnet."

"You haven't a mite of heart or feeling," returned Mrs. Eustace, moving away with lingering steps and slow.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### MEN, WOMEN, AND SNAKES.

**A**BBY'S obstinate fainting-fit only yielded to the doctor's wiser professional measures. He was a prompt energetic little man, and had rushed off in his "buggy" instantly on receiving Captain Eustace's directions as to the spot where he was to find his patient. Eustace himself had gone home, ostensibly to have everything ready when Abby should be brought there; this was rather a misdirection of energy; for Abby, on coming out of her swoon, and drinking a

restorative given her by the doctor, was almost as bright and merry as usual—except to the deeply repentant Leander, who received from her only looks of anger and contempt.

The horses were put to the great waggon that had brought them out. A horse from the farm being substituted for the wheeler that Eustace had taken.

All was gaiety and animation again. Susie, who discovered that she had left her lace parasol (a birth-day present from Sir Alfred) in the cleared space where they had begun to dance, ran back to look for it. As she went she heard rapid steps behind her, and turning, saw Eugene.

“One moment,” he said, overtaking her. “I must *snatch* an opportunity for speaking to you, for I see that you would hardly *give* me one at the point of the bayonet. Is everything at an end between us?”

He spoke the words as if he had been

tutoring himself to say them quietly. It was only by his hurried breathing that she knew that he had laid a stake on them.

“Yes,” she answered; “I do not like for you to imply that there was ever anything begun between us, but as it is true, the words shall go. I *did* have a girl’s first fancy for you. But it is as dead now as last year’s butterflies. I never care to see you again. For with you I have grown only to associate pain and trouble——”

“That is enough,” he interrupted; “four drops of prussic acid are quite as effectual as forty. I am finished. And the end of me shall be visible to you—and to others.” Susie opened her eyes in amazement at his strange manner and evil smile. “Though between you and your mother life is made of little pleasure or profit to me, I still have one plan for the future. The only sort of plan that a hustled off, disappointed, embittered, reckless fellow as I am is

capable of making. I know how Ishmael felt !”

“ Oh, do not speak so !” said Susie, in distress. “ I thought you were quite satisfied with the prosperity you had made for yourself.”

“ *Prosperity!*” he repeated, laying bitter stress on the word. “ Prosperity in a prison of maple trees and water ! I wanted to thrust my independence down my uncle’s throat, and I have done it. That is about all it is worth to me. Hungerford (persistent dog ! ) has won at last, just as I find what he has thought worth winning, worth winning too. I hope you will be able to make him forget me.” With this parting sling-stone he turned to go ; but suddenly came back again. “ Was it you who wrote that letter to Sir Alfred, anonymously, telling him of my marriage ?” he asked, as if determined to leave no device for wounding her untried.



“ I ! ” cried Susie, ablaze with indignation. “ I stoop to that low, mean deed ? You know I did not. You only say it because, knowing that this is the last time you will be permitted to speak to me, you must crowd all the insult and ill-nature that you have to give into it. ” Great anger never makes nice sentences.

“ I do not contradict you, ” he replied, and strode away.

Susie saw her parasol, picked it up, and hastened back to rejoin the others.

She found Eugene by Mrs. Eustace’s side, and a little behind him and her, scrutinizing them through his gold-rimmed eye-glasses, was Sir Alfred Ogle. She watched him let his glasses fall, and turn away, shaking his head.

The rest were talking, laughing, shouting, making much of Abby, pointing an invisible finger of scorn at the miserable Leander. Susie, clambering into the great

high vehicle, with its seats going across and across, found that her place was between Hungerford and a Miss Joy, whom she had heard called "Posy."

Posy's idea of conversation was to have it nearly all to herself. All she wanted from a companion was attentive silence, with a two or three lettered word of exclamation thrown in from time to time.

"We are always on the go," said the young lady, who had used up a good deal of the dictionary, and was now beginning afresh.

"Oh!——" began Susie, and would have said more if she had been allowed.

"Yes, we always have a whole heap of fun on hand," continued Miss Joy, in a tone of self-felicitation. "To-morrow night we are all going over to the Clifton House to the hop that is to be given for Prince ——. Not a ball—no supper—a hop. In the ball-room over the bowling-alley. A lovely

floor. Poppenberg's band. I haven't been told off to dance with him—isn't it a mean shame? Serene Spooner has been, because her father is senator; and so has Miss Whittlesea, because her father was once minister at Copenhagen, and she had spoken twice to the Princess. You'll be there?"

"Yes, I think so."

Then Miss Joy ran on again, as if her brain was a whirligig, and her tongue a mill-clapper.

Arrived at Mr. ——'s house, they all alighted for a sort of heavy tea. Then Susie and Sir Alfred took their departure in a fly, and oh, joy of joys! Hungerford, running out bareheaded, told them that on leaving Mr. —— to morrow, he should come over to the Cataract House.

He shook hands warmly, and went back again. They drove down the woody-smelling avenue, with its rare trees and shrubs, out at the gate, and along beside the savage, brawling water.

“Sir Alfred,” burst out Susie, suddenly, “I must tell you that I never wish to speak to your nephew again. He almost accused me of writing an unsigned letter to you about him; he has said and done other things that I can never forgive.”

“Susie, do not be so very impetuous. Try and cultivate a more *level* manner, if I may be allowed the expression. You shall not have the society of Eugene (who, I am grieved to say, seems growing to be a replica of his valueless father) forced upon you. Certainly, his behaviour with the pretty American is reprehensible. It brings reproach on him, and, indirectly, on us. I will condone him in so far that he shall not be able to complain of illiberality on my part, but it is high time, I think, that he went back to his saw-mill. Not but what I shall not give him enough to cut the saw-mill, if he chooses.”

“I am sure, Sir Alfred,” said Susie,

warmly, "that you will never give him cause to complain of want of generosity. And he needs generosity. Oh, Sir Alfred, he is such a dainty fellow to be working for his living out here in the wilds! He does not seem fit for anything but to be an idle gentleman, does he, with his high-bred face and white hands? Do not let him go back to his mill; he hates it. And he has done well; he has shown that behind his velvety manner he kept concealed an iron spirit of enterprise. Could he not come back to England and lead his old life again? Think how changed his fate is, from what he thought it would be!"

"Why, Susie, it seems to me that you are a rather earnest champion of a man whom you never want to speak to again!"

"The moment I said that, I felt conscience prick. Prick? No, it *stabbed*. I am always blurting out things that, if I reflected a moment, I would never, *never*

say. He is miserable, Sir Alfred ; and his unhappiness is making him reckless. Do, *do* be good to him !” She laid her clasped hands on the old man’s knee, and tears of self-reproach and supplication rushed to her eyes.

“Hum !” said Sir Alfred ; “Ha ! Control yourself, my dear. Eugene shall certainly receive the remnant of my affection for him in the most practical and appreciable of forms. Calm yourself.”

“Oh, I am quite calm now,” answered Susie, smiling. “I wish I could discipline myself to be less of a blunderer, as easily as I can calm myself at this moment !”



## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE TEXANS.

“**P**ATIENT waiting no loss.” Susie’s impatient waiting brought no Hungerford the following day. Neither did she see anything of Eugene but his vanishing form, as, with a lighted cigar, he walked along the veranda, stepping off at the end, and going at a quick pace down the street. He had breakfasted and lunched at the table d’hôte, not obtruding his society on her. When she saw him she was on the point of entering the hotel; her mother’s maid behind her

laden with feather fans, mocassins, horrible pincushions covered with wampum and beads, toy birch-bark canoes—souvenirs for her cousins.

She walked quietly up the steps with the unconscious air of gentle womanhood, her excellent eyes observing, yet seeming to shun observation. Almost every one she met took pains to make their cursory first glance at her a satisfactory second one.

Night stole on, and still Hungerford had not come. Susie had hoped that he would go to the dance over the river with them. As it was, she and her mother and Sir Alfred drove over alone.

The night-mare bridge was safely crossed. They entered the ball-room of the Clifton House, which was but a few yards away from the bridge, and found that air of expectancy, inattention to one another, and overt or covert glancing towards the door



on the part of the guests already assembled, which proved that royalty was waited for.

Two or three young faces which wore a breathless look, and were turned towards the entrance as faithfully as Clytie's to the Sun God, Susie instantly set down as partners *in posse*. One or two of them had as abstracted an expression as if they were looking into the next world. These, she was sure, were composing pretty, well-adjusted speeches to say to their Royal Partner; to come trippingly off the tongue. Alas! when the crucial moment came, they probably tumbled out only frightened, disjointed little sentences.

One of these atanto ones was a tall emaciated girl, who, Susie thought, looked like a callow robin, with an open mouth, and great thin-lidded eyes. Then there was a charming dark-haired girl, who veiled her eager waiting more adroitly, talking to a good-looking man beside her, with interest

and a bright smile. A third looked pale and self-repressed, only watching the door out of the corner of her eye.

At length came an admired moment, when a young gentleman in uniform entered that magnetic space, the doorway; then a change became perceptible almost as marked as when a creature who for a little has not been given the right thing to breathe, is restored to its native element. Mr. ——— was already in the room, but the Eustaces, Eugene, and Hungerford had not yet come.

Before long they arrived. Eugene with the Eustaces, Hungerford walking in alone some time afterwards. He immediately came up and asked Susie to dance the first dance with him, but as it was a quadrille he begged off, and they sat watching the people instead.

A fat old woman was zig-zagging through the dance with the Royal personage, faring sumptuously on the only envious, prolonged

glances she had ever before in her life been accorded. The quadrille was succeeded by a waltz.

“Wait,” said Susie, as Hungerford rose to his feet. “I must watch that hungry young bird fed. You do not think she will look so *starving* when she is actually dancing with him, do you?”

“At present,” answered Hungerford, gravely, as she was taken up, presented, and left, “she looks in the last stage of inanition. Ah! He has spoken to her. The tendons in her neck begin to work convulsively; she is going to answer. She looks a *suspicion* less voracious——”

“Do you know,” interrupted Susie, “it is not right to be amused at her. That girl,” in a tone of penetrative criticism, “is suffering anguish of terror! See how pale her lips are, and how they tremble. See how deadly, *deadly* afraid she is that her long flounces will be in his way; see the

look she darts over at that old gentleman ; he is her father ; he would never forgive her if any *contre-temps* should happen in these twenty minutes. She feels the three hundred eyes that are fixed on her as if they were three hundred sharp needles. She can only stammer out monosyllables, and I have no doubt in some numb spot of her brain there is a nice little set speech all made and waiting to be said, but it never *will* be said, and most likely she will spend stray moments in wishing she *had* said it, which, all added together, would make a fat slice out of her life. But, apropos to nothing, why did you not appear to-day as you said you would ?”

“ I shall be at the Cataract House to-morrow morning. Come, we are losing all of this waltz.”

Susie, being too agreeable-looking, and dancing too much like a bit of thistledown to go unobserved and unadmired, found plenty of partners.

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Towards the end of the evening, she gave a waltz to Captain Eustace.

His face, as she looked cautiously and yet scrutinizingly at it, suggested dark words with dark meanings.

What could a stranger say to assuage a passionate son of the South, whose beautiful young wife was dividing conspicuity with a prince, because of her abandonment to what was evidently *not* a flirtation with the handsome Englishman, Everard?

After dancing with him, she took his arm, and went out on a small balcony opening off the end of the room. They were not speaking to one another at the moment, and the strains of the band drowned their footsteps.

Two people were leaning over the balcony railing, looking down over the garden and croquet-ground below. They were Mrs. Eustace and Eugene.

Involuntarily Susie drew her companion

back; an instinct of self-preservation against the pain of witnessing a man's emotion probably prompted her.

But he pressed forward, every muscle tense with controlled feeling.

A few words in Eugene's low yet clear voice cut through the hollow booming of the water and the dying minor chords of the waltz,—

“I can row you across in twenty minutes——”

A start, a pause, as he became aware of two figures standing just without the doorway, so bringing them within earshot, for the balcony was but a little place.

What was the essence of those few words? Were they the scaffold for a woman's honour to die on? Or a pasteboard block, where the amusement of an hour or two would be brought to an end.

Eustace wheeled sharply round, and went back into the ball-room again. Susie

did not dare to look into his face, until, having taken her to her mother, he bowed, without speaking, and was moving away. Then she glanced up at him. The sharp curves of nostril and eyebrow were a little sharper, and his face was colourless—that was all.

Susie, seating herself by her mother, quietly watched the varied types of New World beauty and manner before her.

Here was the languid, graceful Southerner, the cosmopolitan New Yorker, who had imbibed just enough of foreign attributes to tone down a too marked individuality; here was the Boston woman, not unwilling to stand forth, after flitting the wide world over, in the entirety of her Americanism, a lovable compound of wit and naïveté, of Puritanism and unfettered grace, whose mental limitations ended nowhere; and here, coming up to Susie's side, was the Buffalo girl, with more than a tinge of rusticity and provinciality.



It was Miss Posy Joy, who disliked quadrilles, and had singled out Susie to sit by.

“Mrs. Eustace is behaving like the old Scratch, isn’t she?” began the young lady at once, taking as much care of her flounces as if they had been another self.

“I don’t know,” answered Susie, with forced smile, “because I don’t know how old Scratch behaves; but certainly she seems very different from the other young married women I have seen here, who are so quiet, and seem to admire their husbands very much.”

“Perhaps I shouldn’t mention it, as Mr. Everard is a sort of connection of yours,” continued Miss Joy, apologetically.

“Oh, not at all. The flirtation is quite too evident to go unnoticed.”

Then the talk shifted to the names, dresses, looks of the people about them. As far as she was able, Miss Posy Joy put Susie in possession of the leading bio-



graphical facts of the dancers, generally ending, in the case of the women, with a guess at who had made their gown.

Eugene, on finding his companion and himself alone, continued hurriedly,—

“The closest watch will hardly prevent your taking a walk in the garden! You will not have to go outside your gates; do you not see? You will be saved everything. You often take a book, and sit, sheltered from the afternoon sun, on the steps leading down to the boat’s slip, I know. Why should you not do so to-morrow?”

It being a moral crisis with the girl, she did not reply.

The pair did not again return to the ball-room. They lingered there in the balmy night air, talking in feverish snatches, and then lapsing into breathless pauses, until a voice at the door said, with a warning roughness of tone,—

“Rosalie, come.” And then, in an instant, “Make haste.”

“My! you needn’t be such a snapping turtle, I’m coming,” responded she, trying to use the homely, familiar idioms naturally. Her husband did not offer her his arm, he waited for her to pass through the door-way, following closely on her footsteps without a glance back at Eugene.

“Abby is ready and down at the door,” he said in the same level, husky tone that he had spoken in before.

She could not look at him; and he, in his turn, averted his eyes from her as fearfully as if she had been Medusa. The light cloak she had worn had been left in the carriage, there was nothing to look after for her, no *petit soin* to give her.

He felt that if he had been obliged to draw a cloak around those smooth white shoulders he could not have trusted himself not to bury his teeth in one of them.

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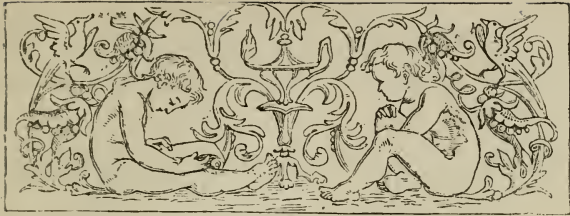
Opening and shutting a great gaudy fan nervously, and with her small, proud head upheld defiantly, she trailed on in front of him, down the stairs, the flaming gas-lights by the way illuminating her pale beauty, set in black, enhancing drapery, a great diamond flashing at her ear, and a diamond star winking and blazing in the night of her hair.

Abby stood at the door, turning a frigid profile to Leander, who, in the attitude of suppliant (an attitude he had steadfastly maintained since the event of the snake), was striving to get at least so far as to have a three-quarter view of the pretty baby features turned to him.

They stepped into the carriage, Abby bidding good-night to her Amoroso chillingly. The Eustaces forgetting altogether to say any parting word, Leander was left standing there breathing a sigh that would have extinguished a candle, but which the

hungry sound of the water gobbled up before it could reach Abby's ears.

Abby being that peace-maker or peace-breaker, as the case may be, a third person, the husband and wife had no further words together. For Abby was timid, afraid of everything from ghosts to spiders, and would not sleep alone ; so, with a return to school-girl days, Mrs. Eustace shared her room with her while she stayed.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

“ I’LL LOVE HER, TILL SHE LOVES ME BEST.”

**T**HE dance went on without the Eustaces as merrily as when they were there. Taking one or two people out of a ball-room is like taking them out of life—they may be a little missed, but the ball goes on.

Hungerford’s *piel-à-terre* being at present the Cataract House, the Ogles took him back with them, leaving Eugene to shift for himself.

The balcony overhanging the Rapids was so inviting that they lingered there, Sir

Alfred being the first to betake himself to bed.

“Come, Susie,” said Lady Ogle presently.

“A little longer, mother. It makes me conscious of my soul to lean over here in the dark, and be carried away by this rushing sound.”

“Where are you carried?” asked Hungerford.

“Out of myself. I do not know where.”

At this juncture the figure of a man issued from one of the long windows. It was Eugene, smoking, as usual.

“Come, Susie,” said Lady Ogle again. “Good-night, Eugene,” she said gently, and touching his arm as he leaned over the rail. Susie, without speaking, went on alone. Eugene started and turned.

“Good-night, Lady Ogle,” he replied coldly.

Lady Ogle stepped through the window,

and the two men were left alone on the balcony.

Eugene moved towards Hungerford.

“Allow me to congratulate you,” he said, as if sneering. “I suppose you consider that we are quits at last?”

“I suppose if I think anything about it I do,” answered Hungerford.

“Of course you think something about it. I have been your *bête-noire*——”

“And now is it to be reversed, and am I to be yours?”

“Not by any means. I have no grudge against you, as you have had against me.”

“In thinking dispassionately of your career,” said Hungerford, “it seems to me that the man for you to cherish the deepest grudge against stands before me. The man with whom you should be most at enmity is yourself.”

If Eugene had lingered prepense to

quarrel with him, he should hear one or two calm truths first.

“My career is nothing to you.”

“It has been,” said Hungerford, in the same calm, neutral tone. “You have interfered with me, you have benefited me. Your instability has taught appreciation of stability. There is nothing like a practical lesson.”

“One or two ‘practical lessons’ learnt through me must have been very grateful,” said Eugene.

“Whatever may have gone before, I antagonize with you no longer. You, I believe, follow your impulses home, I do not,” answered Hungerford. “We need not waste any more words on each other. If it gratifies you to think that you have harmed me, pray think it. The possession of your recollections is a thing I would not rob you of, even if I could.”

He turned, and entered the open window.



A servant had come to close all the windows and extinguish the gas. Eugene, too, entered, and sought his room.

“I felt troubled in spirit to leave you and him on the balcony together last night,” said Susie to Hungerford the following day.

“You should not have thought or felt anything about it,” said Hungerford.

They were walking on Goat Island together, Sir Alfred and Lady Ogle behind them.

“But I could not help it; it worried me. However, I fell asleep at last.”

“You do not mean to say that it kept you awake, Miss Dawnay? Must I call you Miss——”

“I should *insist* upon it,” cut in Susie, flurriedly, “if nearly all the most disagreeable words did not begin with mis—misfortune, mischance, mishap, misanthrope, mischief, mislead, and a whole host of

others. I think that all of us spinsters who have not the advantage of being Lady anything, ought to be called by some more auspicious word."

"I promise you that *I* will never call you by it again," said Hungerford, laughing.

"Oh, yes, you must——"

"I shall not."

"What," said Susie, suddenly, but speaking low, "was your sister's name?"

"Eleanor. She was a sensitive plant. The world would have been too rough for her. She was both proud and faint-hearted; she set her preference on Everard. He, after loving her lightly for a while—he did really love her a little, I think—turned, as his way was, to some newer fancy. She was at Mentone for her health, and, as you may imagine, the fruit her disappointment, anger, wounded pride bore, was death."

He paused, and they both were silent.

“I—I was rude and unmannerly to you that last time I saw you in England,” said Susie. “I have regretted it often, and sincerely.”

“I thought you would,” he answered, gravely. “It was as rude a way of talking as any schoolboy could accomplish.”

“I was angry,” said Susie.

“People must learn to feel angry and not talk angrily,” said Hungerford.

“I think I have learnt,” rejoined Susie, half crying. “You would never hear me talking in that way again.”

“Perhaps,” said Hungerford, “you might even now talk of me to myself in a way I should hardly care to hear, even if it was said in the most unexceptionably civil manner.”

“No, I should not.”

“That is encouraging. Now I think I will be brave enough to ask you if you were glad to see me?”

“*Glad* to see you that night on the bridge, when you set me free? I could have—I could have—I do not know what I could have said and done.”

Sir Alfred and Lady Ogle seated themselves on a seat made of tree boughs, deliciously gnarled and twisted. Susie and Hungerford, following their example, took possession of another, nestled in a hollow, past which the water whirled distractedly.

“You were overjoyed, I think,” said Hungerford, as a response; “but I wish it could have been pure and simple pleasure at seeing me, instead of gratitude to the person who got you out of a painful position.”

“It was everything,” said Susie. “That night I touched my highest capacities for feeling. On the one hand I hated, despised——”

She stopped short.

“Now for the opposites,” said Hunger-

ford. "I had the opposites of those hard words, had I not?"

"Yes," answered Susie, with grudging truthfulness.

"The counterword of hatred is love, of course, and that is what you felt for me, as we stood there face to face in the moonlight."

"I did not," cried Susie, with tears in her voice, and speaking in the hurried, flurried way she had spoken in before. "I have *promised* myself that I never would—*promised* myself," she repeated, urgently.

"When?" he asked.

"Oh, sometime," answered she, vaguely.

"Of course, it must have been sometime, if it happened at all. It could not have been *no* time. Well, allow me to tell you that my belief is you have broken your promise."

She was silent.

"You cannot deny it," he said.

“Yes I can.”

“But *do* you?”

“I only *admire* you,” said Susie, as if making a confession of guilt.

“Nonsense!” he cried, sharply. “Have you not had enough of this perversity?”

“I am afraid *you* have!” said Susie, sighing deeply, and looking at the water with plaintive eyes.

“Oh, never mind about me; answer for yourself.”

“I’d rather answer for you, because I can speak always to please myself, but I cannot make you speak to please me.”

“What do you want me to say?” he asked, with a smile in his grey eyes.

“You never say that you care for *me*!” she whispered, trying to frown away the starting tears.

Then springing up, angry and mortified at herself, she went to her mother.

“We are going over the river,” said Lady

Ogle. "Do you want to come? We are going to see Captain Eustace play a game of billiards against Sir Alfred's sailor friend, Mr. Wynn."

"Oh, yes, I will come," said Susie.

"And I, if you have no objection," remarked Hungerford, from behind her.

No one had any objection, apparently.

They all went over the river together, choosing the boat, instead of the bridge.

Susie was all in white, except for a little straw-coloured bow at her throat.

As she leaned back in the boat, interlacing her fingers to shield her eyes while she looked up at the sheet of falling water, she made Hungerford think of lightsome, legendary things, with Puck-like natures.

"I should like to see something go over," she said. "But everybody says that."

"I will tell you the story of one woman who said it, and in consequence lost the heart of a man who cared for her. He and she

were standing together on Table-rock, when Table-rock was ; and he had with him a Gordon-setter, who (I purposely say *who*, for it deserves the pronoun), had been his friend for years. He was a soldier, stationed at Toronto, and he had brought the dog from home with him. It was his Fidus Achates. The young lady who was beautiful, and all the rest of it, of course, expressed a wish, as you have done, to see something go over. And he, with the exaggeration proper to his frame of mind at the time, said that if it would gratify her, particularly, *he* would go over. This, she condescended to think unreasonable. ‘But,’ she said, ‘I will test you, Captain MacLeod. Throw that dog of yours. You are much too fond of it.’ “Throw Jack !” he said, “you are not in earnest.” ‘Yes I am,’ said his fair friend, with her usual bewitching smile. ‘You told me you would throw *yourself* over. You ought to be glad that



I did not take you at your word, and that I am satisfied to see your dog go instead. Ah! men's words mean so little! MacLeod kissed his dog between the eyes, and said good-bye to his faithful friend. The lady did not revoke her sentence of death on the unresisting, trusting brute, who looked up at his master with dumb faith. So MacLeod flung him over. He could have cried like a child, he told me. He said he hoped Jack's eyes haunted the girl; but he did not believe they did, for she had nothing to haunt. Neither heart nor soul. He never spoke to her again; as you may imagine, or looked at her. They said she fretted for him, and was more unbearable than ever when she found she had really lost him."

"I hope she fretted away her beauty," said Susie. "That would have been a fit punishment."

"I suppose this place abounds with

stories. "Weird, and sad, and terrible," said Lady Ogle.

"Yes. Tragedies are sure to be acted here. One, or two, or three every summer," answered Hungerford.

They landed on the Canadian shore, and walked up the winding path to the top of the precipitous bank.

The billiard-room being in a building with the ball-room, and quite distinct from the hotel, ladies often went there to see their husbands or brothers or friends exhibit their skill.

When the Ogles entered, they found no one there but Captain Eustace and Mr. Wynn.

"Oh, Mrs. Eustace did not come with you?" said Lady Ogle.

"No," answered the Texan. "She did not, Lady Ogle. I have not seen her to-day. The dance tired her."

"The dance!" thought Susie. "She did not dance much."

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Captain Eustace looked as if the dance, or his own emotions, had tired him. His bronzed face was like that of a statue stained with walnut juice. No tinge of red coloured it. But his hand was steady. A hand absurdly small.

Susie, extending her own, mentally compared its size with that of Eustace's. It seemed to her that he could almost wear her gloves. He played wonderfully well, scoring great numbers; and making his adversary lose temper and self-admiration.

Susie, for a short time, watched the game with interest. Then she became tired, and her attention flagged.

"You are bored," said Hungerford, reading her face like a printed page. "Come into the air and sunshine."

She looked inquiringly at her mother. Lady Ogle nodded. She rose to her feet, and went out with Hungerford.

"I am sorry for Captain Eustace. It

was an evil day when he and his wife met Mr. Everard."

"Perhaps. Perhaps not; who knows? I believe in 'out of evil still adducing good,'" answered Hungerford.

"Can 'good' wear such a doubtful face?" said Susie.

"My dear child, I do not think you can talk metaphysics."

"But I should like to be *taught* to talk them," said Susie, pouting.

"Does Everard intend going back to England with Sir Alfred?" asked Hungerford, trying to speak carelessly.

"Sir Alfred does not choose for him to come. Mamma, dear unselfish mamma, was trying with her whole soul last night to advance Eugene's interest. But Sir Alfred is very determined. He cleaves to his own ideas."

"Have you any liking for Everard? Or is it gone?"

"Gone," answered Susie, briefly. "Gone

for ever. No more to be found again than a shilling spent a year ago."

"I met him in Foxboro', you know."

"Did you!" exclaimed Susie. "And he asked me, with all possible calmness, *where you were*, when we were going up the Hudson together"

"No doubt," said Hungerford. "It makes me laugh, really, to see how people circumvent themselves at last. Then," he added, "I knew instantly from the wide crape on his hat that the handsome Creole was gone——"

"Speak softly, and say the *poor* handsome Creole. We saw her grave. It was on an island. There she lies, lonelier than a child lost in the forest."

"You *have* a heart to be touched, Susie."

"Oh, did you ever doubt it?" she answered, meltingly.

"No, perhaps not; but I have doubted whether it was within my power to touch it."

They had left the green enclosure of the ball-room, and were wandering along by the river's edge.

“There is a concession!” cried Susie, joyfully.

“Do you like mummies?” asked Hungerford.

“Yes—no—I don't know.”

“Because if you do, I can show you two or three. This is the ‘Museum,’ it contains two-headed lambs (stuffed), an endless quantity of birds, the mummies I have mentioned, and a few other things shown for a shilling, because they are not worth seeing.”

“You must not talk of shillings over here. You must talk only of dollars and cents.”

“Shall we go in and see the mummies?”

“Yes; but mamma——”

“Oh, we will go back in time to meet her.”

They entered the wooden building. People in waterproof garments, which made them look like Westphalia hams, were issuing out of a door, on their way under the fall.

It was cool and dark after the heat and glare outside. Our two friends strolled from case to case — Susie dividing her attention between the exhibited objects and the groups of strange or attractive-looking people who were in the building with them.

“Would you really not like to have Everard go back in the steamer with you?” asked Hungerford, as if determined to probe her to the utmost.

Susie made a wry face.

“Would you like to eat a sugared oyster?” asked she.

“No,” said Hungerford, laughing. “Is that your answer to my question?”

“Yes; it is expressive enough, I should think.”

“Look here; I should talk seriously to you, if you were not absorbed to absent-mindedness in the millinery of your neighbours.”

“I am going to make a speech to show that I really *think*,” said Susie. “Now listen. What Americans are wanting in is repose.”

“Then it has been their manners that you have been watching, and not their millinery.”

“Oh, I do not mean here, particularly. Wherever I have observed them.”

“Eustace is not wanting in dignity,” said Hungerford. “And, by the way, I suppose by this time his game is finished. Shall we go out and see if they have left the billiard-room?”

“Yes,” answered Susie, with docility.

They sauntered out into the fervent July sunshine again, and retraced their steps along the unguarded river's verge. Before



they had gone far, they met the Ogles and Eustace coming towards them.

“What a strange look Captain Eustace has!” said Susie. “He looks as if he were drugged with opium, or something.”

Hungerford observed Eustace’s face as he approached them; then looked down into Susie’s, pausing a moment before he replied.

“Do you know how a man looks who is drugged with opium?” he then asked.

Something in his tone stirred the “sentiment intime” of Susie. She looked quickly up at him.

“No,” she answered. “I don’t think I do; I only imagine. Do *you* know?”

“Yes; I had a friend who narrowly escaped being an opium-taker. He once described to me graphically the delights and tortures that began to weld themselves with his life. Fortunately he had a strong will; and as he had conquered other things, he conquered this tyrannous habit.”

The others, having descried them, had turned, and were walking towards the bridge. Susie and Hungerford loitered behind them.

“Did he describe to you what he saw?” asked Susie, having tact enough to see that the subject was an interesting one to her lover. “I have often intended to read ‘Confessions of an Opium Eater.’”

“No; but he described to me what he felt. How there were moments when the stimulated brain worked grandly; how ideas crowded thick and fast, and there was a noble eloquence in conveying them to other minds. He told me of the sleep, heavy as that of a hibernating bear, and of how he started back in the morning, at the sight of his own filmy and ophidian eyes, when the reactionary stage had come. But he freed himself,” continued Hungerford in an earnest monotone.

They now came up with the others, who

were pausing at the bridge, waiting for them.

“Will you come over to the United States with us, Captain Eustace?” asked Lady Ogle, smiling.

“No,” answered he, with apathetic slowness. “I thank you. I have promised to dine at four, at the Clifton House, with Wynn.”

“Oh, how bright and gay it all looks!” cried Susie, glancing about her with happy eyes, and speaking in the full tones of thorough enjoyment.

“What a pretty little carriage with a Chinese umbrella over it; what spirited ponies! Are not mustangs, such as Mrs. Eustace has, delicately made and wild-looking like those?”

He did not answer. Her words seemed to have wafted his spirit away into the past. Perhaps in imagination he saw the girl who was afterwards to be his wife

driving pie-bald ponies like these, and as she passed him, thrilling him with a glance from her Hourî eyes.

“Good-bye, then,” said Lady Ogle, holding out her hand.

“By the way,” said Eustace, trying to rouse himself, turning his head, slowly but not his eyes, which remained fixed on the same spot, “I think I will walk over with you. I want to speak to Everard; I want to see if I can find him over there.”

He walked on at Susie’s other side; his glance roving from face to face in search of that one detested one.

He was evidently absorbed in some mental toil, to which all his energy referred itself.

Somehow Susie’s youthful exuberance was checked by his companionship. The chatter she had been indulging in died away to silence. Hungerford, too, seemed worked on, impassible as he usually was, by the man’s mood.

They walked on silently enough, the delectable wet air drifting over them.

At the hotel, Captain Eustace inquired for Eugene.

Mr. Everard had gone to Black-rock that morning early.

Sinister, indeed, to the Texan was this intelligence.

He returned to the others and shook hands, remarking, as he did so, that he liked the English fashion of shaking hands in greeting and farewell.

They watched his sinuous slight figure until it was out of sight.

"I am glad he did not find Eugene," said Lady Ogle, with a sigh of relief.

Hungerford answered nothing. He was thinking of a few nineteenth century ideas that he had aired in the virgin forest but the other day, this bright-faced girl for a listener.

He looked long and earnestly at her.

It was refreshing to see anything so antipodal to tragic emotions, and dark sinister thoughts as she.

“Well!” she cried, flushing; “what do you think of me?”

“When you see a man with his eyes fixed on a flower, does it follow of necessity that he is thinking of the flower?” asked Hungerford, smiling. “I say a flower, because it sounds prettier than if I said a sofa cushion, or the legs of a chair.”

Susie knitted her brows together for an instant; then her face grew smooth again.

Sir Alfred and his wife, who had gone on in front, and had lingered on the shady veranda, now entered the hotel, for it was luncheon time.

Susie ran forward and joined them, leaning confidently on Sir Alfred’s arm, as Hungerford determined she should one day lean on his. Perhaps to-morrow!



## CHAPTER XIX.

THE RUINED HEART : THE JARRED BRAIN.

**W**HEN a day which we know is going to be fateful dawns on us, we turn to nature eagerly, to see if she has sent us wherewithal to mirror our mood ; it may be to help or hinder us in some design so important that motives, deeds, and words of time past, seem mere parasites to cling to it.

We study the clouds as if to-day they held a deeper meaning for us than on other days, and find a strange significance in the simplest, most natural effects. Trivialities,

which at other times would be overlooked, are metamorphosed into omens. A rose-leaf fluttering across our path has power to make us pause. We find a melancholy suggestiveness, perhaps, in the ability with which a spider snares a fly, in the ease with which a cat fascinates a humming-bird, in the nonchalance displayed by the slug as he disfigures the flower.

Mrs. Eustace, gliding downstairs at two o'clock, having breakfasted in bed at mid-day, found the shafts of sunlight that came through the window on the landing almost as sharp-pointed as if they had been veritable spears of gilded steel, and she had struck against them. They derived their power to wound from her knowledge that she would, in all human probability, never see them again there.

Innumerable trifles seemed charged with a doleful message to her; but more doleful still would they have been, had they signi-



fied that a boat with one strong rower would not be waiting for her down at the end of the garden, when the sun set somewhat lower.

She had "eaten of the insane root which takes the reason prisoner."

In one of the airy rooms, opening out on a wide veranda, she found Abby with a dish in front of her, where floated photographs. She was fishing them out, and pasting them in her book, expending all her imagination in arranging them artistically.

"How are you coming on, Abby?" asked Mrs. Eustace in her die-away tones, and looking over her friend's shoulder.

"Middling. I can put them in place all easily enough, but they won't *stay* put," answered Abby with dissatisfaction, and going on uninterruptedly patting a photograph with a fine soft handkerchief.

"There!" she said, giving it a final dab, "that looks well, *n'est ce pas?*" And she

displayed a large Vandyke effect of Eugene Everard. "I didn't ask him for it; he offered it to me, and of course I accepted it as if I was tickled to death."

Mrs. Eustace murmured some word of reply, and turned away.

"Captain Eustace has gone to the Clifton House to play billiards. He told me to tell you," said Abby, "and he thought he should stay and dine there."

"Yes," said Mrs. Eustace, almost inarticulately; and taking a book from off the table, went out of the window, and wandered away into the garden. Seating herself on the bench in the shade, she opened the romance she had picked up, and looking over its pages, fixed her eyes on the clean, hard path.

Before very long she saw Abby running towards her with little short steps like a sand-piper.

"Leander wants me to go driving with him."

“Then you and he have made it up!” rejoined Mrs. Eustace, looking into Abby’s rosy baby face.

“I am going to, if I go driving with him.”

“Then do go, Abby. I shall stay quietly here all day. I have a head-ache.”

Abby turned and ran back again; “*une rose fricassée dans de la dentelle.*”

Mrs. Eustace sat there alone, waiting. She was all in black, with a plain black hat on, and a pair of dark gloves in her pocket. She sat there with her small head erect like a deer’s, listening for the plash of oars to sound through the monotonous droning of the distant falls.

Suddenly she started, for a footstep could be heard sharp and quick on the gravel, and with quivering nostrils and paling lips, she watched her husband coming towards her.

“Who is this good, quiet demure lady

sitting here reading all alone? In black, like a nun too. Why, it is my wife, my Rosalie."

These words, spoken between clenched teeth, were as mask and domino to the tone of malediction in which they were uttered.

She rose and confronted him speechlessly.

"Where are you going?"

"Nowhere," she answered stonily.

"You always can keep a stiff upper lip. I know that 'Nowhere.' You never said anything truer. What did you marry me for?" he went on, hardly above a husky whisper.

"I do not know. Soon enough I wished I had not. Because you persecuted me to, perhaps; I wish I had not. It would have been better if I had died instead. There is a freedom in death——"

"Yes," he said in a voice like the tolling of a bell, "there is freedom in death. I

wish I had known, that day under the oleanders;" he paused, covering his face with his hands.

"I wish *I* had known that day under the oleanders," she said, taking up his words in tragic iteration. "Go, leave me. I like as well now to have you in my sight as if you were a moccasin snake. I want to be alone."

"You want to be alone!" he cried with unrestrained fury. "And how long would you be alone? Do you think that I am hood-winked? Do you think I do not know? Do you think I haven't seen that you hated to look at me, hated to hear me open my lips, hated to see me come into the room with you?"

The dip of oars floated faintly up, grew clear, ceased abruptly. A tense, strained look came into Mrs. Eustace's face. Her lips seemed frozen, and her heart too.

"It was going to be very easy, wasn't it,

to slip away like a moonbeam? I ordain that you shall stay. If you fret yourself crazy, if you cry yourself blind, if you torment yourself dead, so much the better. I should like you to hate yourself mad. You want to be alone. Then *be* alone!"

He turned, and swaying for an instant, started at a rapid run down the wide flower-fringed path towards the water's edge.

She tried to cry out, but she was like one dream-bound,—chained in a hideous dream; tortured in a dream and gagged, suffering the agony of a dream too hideous to be endured in waking moments; but she followed him, that the Nadir of torment might not be escaped.

She saw—still like one in a nightmare—the green boat lying on the smiling water like a lily leaf. She saw her lover's beautiful fair face, seeming to be in unison with the glory of the sunshine, and the verdure of the banks, and the sapphire of the river.

She saw her husband, lithe and leopard-like, spring into the boat ; hatless, his long dark hair touching his shoulders, his lambent green eyes, unwinking, unflinching, devouring the fair comeliness of the other, as if it satisfied the hunger and thirst of his soul. She watched him tear the oars out of the hands of the doomed one, and with a frantic movement fling them away. The boat sidled softly down the stream, then darted swiftly on with the current beyond reach of rescue. She pressed her hands against her temples, muttering helplessly,

“What is it? where am I?” and so staggered forward and fell, brain-riven.

“Madman !” cried Eugene, in a choked voice, “what are you doing ?”

But all words were vain as vanity itself ; for the current had grappled their boat, and the oars were gone.

“I am weeding the world of you,” an-

swered Eustace, with such a laugh as Eugene had never imagined.

In vain for him to waste any strength of muscle in clutching at the throat of that fellow-voyager into the dark of eternity ; in vain to waste any strength of soul in execrating him ; in vain to waste any strength of lung in sending a cry of despair across the angry voice of the water to helpless men on shore.

The rapids were nearing fast. The stream was broad, and treacherously placid ; for the current hurried madly, though the water was so smooth and blue. The shores were peace itself, desolate, low, and flat, and of a smiling green.

Humanity seemed a thing to Eugene with which he had once had to do in a time very long ago. Now he was only the helpless possession of an implacable element. His old self he seemed to have left



behind him in the vivid days of the past.

The sound of a church bell at Chippewa came stealing faintly over the grassy slopes and swirling water. It conveyed to him no idea of metallic agency; it was eloquent, as if endowed with organic life. It spoke of actions which he could never more share, of sights he would never more see, of the sincere desire of souls which he would never again hear expressed. As for his own soul, it seemed to have no sincere desire; it was clogged with a hopeless apathy.

Farewell to life he took in an agonized look over to the lonely river banks. Why should he speak to Eustace any more than to the racing water? They were equally instrumental in his destruction.

He moved his dilated eyes, and fixed them on him dumbly. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. He attempted to

articulate some word of imprecation and fury ; but the muscles of his throat only quivered, and the root of his tongue was dumb and palsied ; he could not speak, even if he would.

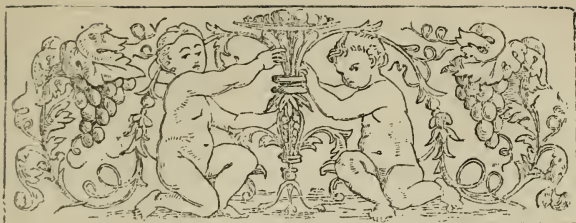
They were in the Rapids. A brawling, tumultuous water snatched at the boat greedily, and lashed it, and forced it over the suggestions of sharp-pointed rocks, and drove it like a dead leaf into whirling eddies and out again ; into sidelong jets of translucent, sliding emerald, and back again ; over miniature cataracts, that foamed over the verge of little walls of rock, and so down again. And mingled now with its vixen treble was the leonine bass of the monster water, roaring sullenly as it leaped the abyss. And they must leap with it ! their cry of anguish, if they gave one, annihilated by that insentient and thunderous voice.

Nearer and nearer grew the great black-

---

ness of darkness, though the sun shone broadly overhead. Closer and closer Death approached ; not stealing on them in the dark, like a midnight thief ; not throttling them unawares, like a swift assassin ; not laying chilly fingers on a weak, faint-beating heart, to gently still it for ever ; not creeping softly to them, in the midst of pain, lullingly ; causing them to cease to be as they ceased from suffering ; not giving them release, long desired, long hoped for, from a worn-out frame ; not leading them insidiously down a flowery path, to stab them in the lungs at last ;—but giving them the daylight, and the sunlight, and all the sensations of full health, and all the consciousness of an undulled brain, all the keen perceptions of unclouded faculties ; giving them now the sight of peopled shores, and figures who made motions of horror and dismay ; letting the wild bird in its freedom sweep through the crystal

air above their heads; letting the wind,  
—freighted with odours of woodland and  
meadow where squirrels were chattering  
and peaceful flocks grazing—fan their livid  
faces.



## CHAPTER XX.

“SIN AND DEATH, SISTERS TWAIN.”

**I**N the afternoon glow, with the  
band playing

“I’m as happy, as happy.  
As a big sunflower !”

with groups of gaily-dressed people going  
hither and thither, with the air moistened  
deliciously by the drifting spray, Susie and  
Hungerford walked through the brilliant  
little street side by side.

“I’m as happy, as happy,  
As a big sunflower !”

sang Susie, following the tune in a half voice.

“Are you?” he asked, bending down a little, and looking into her face.

“Yes,” she answered, simply, and meeting his eyes trustfully. “What you have just said to me has made me perfectly happy. I wish for nothing.”

“Nor I,” he answered, in a moved voice; “I wish for nothing more—at present.”

“Come to the balcony over the Rapids, and I will read you Alice’s letter,” said Susie.

“You will have to read it pretty near my ear,” he returned, smiling.

They entered the hotel, passed through the drawing-room, where the usual young lady was playing a waltz on the piano, the usual young gentleman of tender years standing on tiptoe, and seeking to look through the stereoscope. The mirrors multiplied them by eight.

“ This is the way we look to other people,” she said to herself, with a pleased glance into one of the great sheets of glass. Stepping out on the balcony, they drew, or rather, Hungerford drew, chairs to a quite deserted little end directly overhanging the water, and there they seated themselves, Susie drawing an English letter out of her pocket, and in a minute commencing to read.

“ I’ll skip the beginning.”

“ No, don’t. I want to hear you call yourself ‘ my dearest Susie.’ ”

“ It is ‘ my darling Susie.’ ”

“ Better still. Now, then.”

“ Consider *that* read.

“ ‘ While you are blazing under a torrid sun, imagine me in a cloth dress, almost forgetting here in Cumberland that there is such a round hot gentleman. I have been here a week. It is the most lovely place, and such nice people staying here.

---

Only a few, but all just the people one is delighted to meet.

“I found your letter most interesting, particularly the description of your adventure with Mr. Everard. I heard long ago that Mr. Hungerford had gone to America. I knew you and he would meet, as a matter of course.” Then followed a page of trivialities, leading up to the marrowy part of the letter.

“Staying in the house is Lord Wellwood. I think I have written you of him before. He is not handsome, but with the thoroughly eagle, aristocratic nose you used to profess to admire. Above it is what I once read of as ‘a nobly receding forehead.’ He is a delightful listener, which Aunt Margaret, you know, thinks a great charm both in man and woman. He lets one talk by the hour, only throwing in an admiring or an interrogative word now and then, in a way I find very engaging. You will wonder,



Susie, why I take so much trouble in describing him to you, but not when you read that I am engaged to him. I am as happy as possible. Indeed I do not think I could be happier. Everything is as satisfactory as it can well be. I do not send you a photograph of him, since none of his do him justice. I dare say Mr. Hungerford may know him; if you see him on a friendly footing, you can ask him if Wellwood is not the dearest creature ——”

“Do you? And is he?” asked Susie, looking up, and laughing.

“I know him slightly. Of course you cannot expect me to say that he is ‘the dearest creature.’”

“No; but really, what is he like?”

“He is like a multitude of other young men of four and twenty whom I know—he fancies himself. He is not worse looking than he can help being, with a hawk-nose, a receding chin, and that ‘nobly retreating

forehead' that your cousin writes about. Conversation is equivalent to one of the lost arts with him. He rides well, I think. I don't know much more about him. He has not many salient points."

"Well, since Alice is satisfied, all is as it should be. Now I will read you the rest of her letter. Let me see. 'The dearest creature. You must be one of the bridesmaids. And I will include Cora, who, by the way, is much improved. She, Lucy, and mamma are at Folkestone.'"

After dwelling at considerable length on her temporal blessings of new toilettes, betrothal gifts, anti-nuptial gaieties and advantages, Alice drew her letter to a close.

"I think she must be improved herself," remarked Susie; "there is not a slang-word in the letter. And by the way, speaking of being improved, what sort of answer would you give me, I wonder, if I were to ask you whether you thought *me* at all improved?"

“ I will tell you, without your asking me, that you have arrived at such a point of perfection that I forbid your advancing one other step, or you will become less lovable.”

“ Oh, if you say that, I shall go backwards like a crab !”

“ Backwards or forwards, or in whatever direction you go, it has been proved with certainty that I can follow you !”

“ Confess,” said Susie, “ the fact of your having to pursue me, and conquer my opposition to you, gave me my sole charm in your eyes.”

“ Not your *sole* charm. For you had a charm to me, in those ‘priggish’ days when I had not learnt that to win you I must be a persistent wooer.”

Susie laughed, but the laugh died on her lips. Her face mirrored some ghastly sight.

“ A boat !” she said, in a horror-smitten voice. “ A boat in the Rapids.”

Other tongues took up the words.

“ A boat ! A boat in the Rapids ! ”

In the midst of their life, a soul was in death. One woman fainted, and was carried away. There was a terrible silence for an instant.

“ Ropes ! ” cried some one. “ Let us, for God’s sake, try and do something ! ”

Susie leaned over the balcony rail, with the fascination of terror in her eyes.

“ Come away, Susie ; do not look, ” said Hungerford.

But she neither spoke nor moved. The boat came nearer. Two men were seen confronting one another like images of stone. It drew nearer still. It slid impetuously and sidelong right under the pale girl face stretched over the water below.

Like eyes imagined in some moment when the brain works morbidly, two eyes were lifted and fixed on Susie’s. Blue and bright as the sky overhead ; familiar, yet strange. Haunted with the death that

their owner was already tasting ; haunting, with their dumb, hopeless agony, the soul that received their dying gaze.

So near that the rose at her throat, if it had fallen, would have almost dropped at his feet ; so far away that life had no link to connect him with her.

The water swept him on : her face imaged in his starting eyes, perhaps imprinted on his numb brain.

As they drew sickeningly near to the smooth and gem-like verge, the two men were seen to make a movement towards each other ; impelled by who can tell what impulse of agony ?

Was all forgotten now but their brotherhood of despair ? Could relativity be in that supreme moment ? Were they any longer Eustace and Everard ? Any longer sinned against and sinning ? Any longer avenger and victim ? Or were they only two souls stripped of earthly attributes, out

in the mocking sunlight plunging together into the dark?—two lonely, death-marked ones, within bow-shot of a multitude of forms all instinct with lusty life?—two fellow-voyagers along the road that never lacks a traveller?

Was the alienation of hatred merged into the community of suffering?

“Be his Friend!” whispered Susie, sinking on her knees and hiding her face.

The boat was gone.

The sun sank lower, and its level rays glittered on the spray. The spray arose incense-wise; prismatic bows, like the wraiths of dead flowers, trembled in it, and under these ethereal archways the swallows darted, bathing their little wings in the wet and jewelled air.

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